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BY THE SAME AUTHOR

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THE LIFE OF LORD STRATHCONA AND MOUNT ROYAL

IN
TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME I

Don S. Smith

THE LIFE OF LORD STRATHCONA AND MOUNT ROYAL

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
The Riverside Press Cambridge

THE LIFE OF
LORD STRATHCONA
AND
MOUNT ROYAL

G.C.M.G., G.C.V.O.

By BECKLES WILLSON

AUTHOR OF "THE GREAT FUR COMPANY"
"THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF JAMES WOLFE," ETC.

VOLUME I

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
The Riverside Press Cambridge

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HISTORY DEPARTMENT

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Should Canada arise and ask herself
Who gave her unity, peace, wealth, and strength,
What fearless warrior or statesmen wise
Moulded her destiny, with pious hand,
For noble purpose and for lofty aim?
Methinks I find her answer here
On this broad brow and on these features firm
That fourscore and ten years have left unscathed,
Fit temple of a mind to honour given.

Preface

THAT this book, written amidst the distractions of war, in the shadow of the armoury, to the sound of marching men, as my country drills and sends forth her sons to the greatest conflict in history, should relate the long life of one whose concern was wholly and markedly with peace, may seem an irony of circumstance. But in truth its appearance is far from inopportune. Had his particular genius and his efforts tended otherwise, Canada had not been opulent and strong and heartened for the fray which is to decide the fate of the British Empire. To him, more than to any single other, is due her material prosperity and much of her political temper. The way was prepared and he died on the very eve of the ordeal.

My narrative will, I trust, dispel a little of that web of mystery which has so long enveloped Lord Strathcona's personal antecedents and many of his most notable actions. For something of this mystery he himself, it must be admitted, was, whether involuntarily or by design, responsible. Years ago Lord Aberdeen remarked that "he has always shown a reticence regarding his personal experiences and a dislike to recording his own performances." His was not a nature to shun the light when it was honest daylight: but when the vulgar bull's-eye of publicity sought out his private

life, he withdrew into deeper obscurity. Self-revelation was not one of his talents: he did not wear his heart upon his sleeve. If he permitted legends to accumulate which a timely disavowal would have shattered, it may be that their currency appealed to his sense of humour.

In undertaking the present task, it fell to me, at an early stage, to examine certain historical episodes, in which Lord Strathcona took a part, a little more closely than I had done previously. Many letters and documents in the material before me set familiar events in a different aspect. The result was to bring about a considerable revision of judgment. Now that all the principals in the Red River insurrection of 1869 have passed away, it is possible to relate the story a little more ingenuously than have my predecessors. Sir John Macdonald, Joseph Howe, William McDougall, William Mactavish, and Louis Riel have passed into history. I trust there are no lingering susceptibilities to wound or prejudices to exasperate. In other directions, I have taken, as will be seen, full advantage of the privilege conferred by time.

There used to be much heated discussion as to the "complicity" of the Hudson's Bay Company's officers in the outbreak led by Riel, at the time of the transfer to Canada of Rupert's Land. As my narrative shows, if the part of the officers was passive, it was in consequence of the very unjust behaviour toward them by the London Board. They were asked to extinguish a conflagration in a house

from which they had been ejected, and the proposal did not fill them with enthusiasm. Lord Strathcona came eventually to be fully aware of all the facts, but circumstances made it, in his opinion, impolitic for him to speak.

I feel, too, that the time has come for me to speak quite plainly about the Hudson's Bay Company's relations with the "wintering partners." Here again is a matter which Lord Strathcona's loyalty to tradition made him disinclined to discuss or even to contemplate, although he was under no delusion as to facts or tendencies. The copious testimony I present hardly exhibits in a favourable light the conduct of the London Board and shareholders toward the vested interests of the "wintering partners" who had coalesced with them as equals in 1821, but who, as the narrative makes clear, were slowly and craftily deprived of their heritage. As Donald A. Smith used to remind his fellow-officers, the North-West Company, which was one of the two parties to the famous coalition, and of which all the great fur-trading pioneers were members, was Canadian in origin, its *personnel* being chiefly Scottish and French-Canadian.

That one who has been described as a panegyrist of the Hudson's Bay Company should now attack it, may appear invidious. But apart from what I conceive to be my simple duty, a distinction must be drawn. The Company founded in 1667 and amalgamated with the North-West Company in 1821 ceased in the strict historical sense to exist when it surrendered its charter in 1870. The con-

tinuity was already interrupted when it was sold to the International Financial Society in 1863. This latter transaction was carried out by a Governor and Committee without the privity of the "wintering partners," who unanimously expressed their disapproval when it was too late. The Governor and Committee had disappeared; Sir George Simpson was dead; his successor, A. G. Dallas, refusing to incur any further odium, resigned; the officers were widely sundered, and their only spokesman at this critical juncture, William Mactavish, was stricken by a mortal illness. Such were the circumstances when Donald Smith emerged from obscurity, when the revamped London Corporation hastened to sell to Canada its territorial rights over lands not wholly its own. It is a melancholy tale, this triumph of the London shareholders over the "wintering partners": more than once thereafter did Lord Strathcona intervene to temper their rapacity, and when he eventually secured a controlling interest in the concern, he saw that any scheme of reconsideration and restitution must be personal with himself — a quixotic project, indeed, and involving besides an aspersion upon the memory of his former superiors; he contented himself at last with giving each of the old surviving factors a pension in his will.

The sources of my information are far too numerous for me here to specify in full; but it were ungrateful not to return public acknowledgment to some who have given me generous and most valuable assistance. His daughter, Baroness Strath-

cona and Mount Royal, has from the first taken a deep interest in the work, as have the co-executors, Mr. John W. Sterling and Mr. James Garson, W.S. I acknowledge also the courteous help of his two nieces, Mrs. Grant, of Forres, and Miss Margaret Smith, of Edinburgh; his cousins, Mrs. Cantlie, of Montreal, and Mrs. Lewis, of Belfast; his stepson, Mr. James Hardisty Smith, and Mrs. Ross Robertson, of Montreal.

For the chapters relating to Hudson's Bay Company affairs, I am specially indebted to Messrs. Roderick MacFarlane, Colin Rankin, W. D. B. Ross, and to Mr. William Armit, formerly Secretary of the Company. For copies of the official correspondence in Lime Street, I am beholden to my friend, Sir Thomas Skinner, the present Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, who, I hasten to add, is in no sense a party to the misdeeds of the original body corporate. Dr. Arthur Doughty, C.M.G., the Dominion Archivist, has also helped me ungrudgingly, as have many other public officials at Ottawa. My particular thanks are due to Sir Wilfrid Laurier for entrusting to me unreservedly the whole of his copious private and official correspondence with the late High Commissioner; to his predecessor, Sir Charles Tupper, Bart., and to Sir Robert Borden, who treated me with a like generosity. Of published sources I must mention here but two, Sir Joseph Pope's very able but still incomplete *Memoirs of Sir John A. Macdonald* and Messrs. Shortt and Doughty's valuable compilation, *Canada and its Provinces.*

To the last I leave the name of my chief inspirer and counsellor, Sir William Cornelius Van Horne, K.C.M.G., whose zeal for the memory of his friend, and partiality to myself, combined, with rare knowledge, to smooth many of the rough, and illumine several of the obscure, stages in the journey.

Clifton Grove,
Windsor, Nova Scotia,
August 6, 1915.

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The Life of Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal

CHAPTER I

BIRTH AND PARENTAGE

1820–1838

If ancient Morayshire is one of the most interesting districts of the Scottish Highlands, the little town of Forres is the most interesting spot in the shire. The neighbouring heaths, all wild and barren as they are, boast an abiding renown in the pages of Shakespeare. Here are laid some of the principal scenes in the tragedy of *Macbeth;* on one sterile and desolate tract known as the "Hard Muir" — still a "blasted heath," as described in the play — Macbeth had his first meeting with the "weird sisters," who with their salutation, "All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be King hereafter!" stirred in his soul the fearful ambition that led him to wade through slaughter to a throne: —

> "How far is't call'd to Forres? What are these
> So wither'd, and so wild in their attire,
> That look not like the inhabitants o' the earth
> And yet are on't?"

In the town the visitor is still shown the site of the royal palace where Macbeth, at his Coronation,

drank to the health of the absent Banquo, and saw seated in a chair, invisible to the rest of the assembly, the ghost of the comrade he had caused to be slain.

It is as the county of Elgin that Morayshire now figures on the map. It is bounded on the north by Moray Firth and on the south by the picturesque mountain scenery of Inverness. Through the county flow three streams, — the Spey, the Lossie, and the Findhorn, — all prolific in salmon, and all distinguished by the romantic charm of their valleys; while, in the beautiful little lochs dotted over the pleasant region and forming the source of several streams, tributary to the main rivers, the angler for trout finds an abundant reward.

Forres is very proud of being a royal burgh, but when it became so history does not record, all the old charters having vanished; but according to an oft-quoted verse of one of the local minstrels —

> "Forres, in the days of yore,
> A name 'mang Scotia's cities bore,
> And there her judges o'er and o'er
> Did Scotland's laws dispense;
> And there the monarchs of the land
> In former days held high command,
> And ancient architects had planned,
> By rule of art in order grand
> The royal residence."

At the time of Lord Strathcona's birth, Forres[1]

[1] The word "Forres" is derived from two Gaelic vocables — *far uis:* near water; a name singularly appropriate to its position. The little village of Findhorn was the port of Forres, as Leith is the port of Edinburgh. The importance of both the one and the other is now unhappily a thing of the past.

contained about 3500 souls; but it had anciently been far more populous, and of greater consequence than the county town of Elgin.[1]

My affection [once said the town's most distinguished son, nearly three quarters of a century after he had quitted it] has always gone forth to this town of Forres and its beautiful surroundings. Is there another town or city which has anything more interesting or more beautiful? Let us take the Cluny Hill; let us take the banks of the Findhorn, the Sluie, and Randolph's Leap; or that interesting memorial to the great naval hero, Nelson; the "blasted heath," or the Culbin sands. While recalling Forres it has often

[1] The turnpike road from Aberdeen to Inverness passes through Forres, and the district roads and bridges are good. The town is situated on a dry and beautifully terraced bank, sloping gently towards the south and north, having one main street, lit with gas, with numerous lines of houses diverging from its sides, which are separated from one another by old and productive gardens. There is a new jail and court-house, decorated cross, handsome assembly rooms, and two excellent inns. The Forres *Gazette* is published fortnightly. None of the buildings in the town require particular notice; but the traveller will not fail to perceive strong indications of the Flemish origin of the people in their fair features, broad dialect, and in the old-fashioned style of having their houses generally erected with their gables toward the street, and in the low Saxon archways conducting to their inner courts and small dark shops. Branches of the British Linen, National and Caledonian Banks. Markets twice a week, and several annual fairs. Six schools, four of which are associated in an Academy. The teachers of three of these being the parochial schoolmasters, receive salaries from the funds of the burgh; the fourth, a charity school, for educating poor children of the parishes of Forres, Rafford, and Kinloss, is endowed by funds left by the late Jonathan Anderson, of Glasgow. The other two schools are supported by the fees and contributions of the scholars. There are two boarding-schools for young ladies, having four teachers, neither of which is endowed; and there are two other females who teach a few children, and receive small salaries from the burgh funds, besides fees. (Dawson, *Statistical History of Scotland*, 1843.)

struck me that certainly there is a resemblance between this and another town with which I have been intimately connected. Here you have as the background, Cluny Hill, and in the face of you Findhorn and the placid Mosset; and in that town of which I speak — in Montreal — you also have the background of a beautiful mountain, and before it the broad, flowing St. Lawrence.[1]

Curious certainly is the comparison: it loses nothing in its suggestiveness when we are further reminded that the patron saint of Forres was none other than St. Lawrence!

Other interesting antiquities which he often recalled, as being familiar with in childhood, are the Forres Pillar and the Witches' Stone. The former is about half a mile from Forres. It is a remarkable obelisk, an enormous slab of free stone, about twenty feet high, the figures being wonderfully distinct, and is supposed to have been erected in memory of a victory over the Danes. The figures represent warriors, together with very beautiful Runic knots and circles, cut in *alto relievo*. Since the days of Pennant, it has given rise to many puzzling questions among archæologists. The "Witches' Stone" is that on which those unfortunate beings were wont to suffer torture and death.

Yet [according to the historian of Moray] notwithstanding all these marks of distinctiveness, Forres neither has, nor has ever had, any history. There are,

[1] Lord Strathcona; speech on receiving the Freedom of the Town of Forres, 1910.

indeed, a few noteworthy incidents connected with it, but they had never any real vivifying influence on the affairs of the district, and their chief importance lies in their own picturesqueness, or in the indirect light they throw upon the inclination of local sentiment and opinion.[1]

In the second decade of the last century there had come to dwell in Forres a couple from the neighboring district of Strathspey. The husband, Alexander Smith, of Archiestown, was a man not without parts but offering in his character a strong contrast to both his sons; local tradition speaks of him as volatile, fond of song and a convivial glass, a cheerful companion, but somewhat lacking in those stable qualities which were needed to make his way in the world. His forbears, the Gows or Smiths, were long settled in the parish of Knockando and there is frequent mention of them in the old Morayshire records. One George Smith — believed to have been Alexander's grandfather — was out in '45, and was famous for his strength and courage. He afterwards served with Clive in India. Alexander's mother was a Grant, a fact of great significance and importance in the career of his descendants.

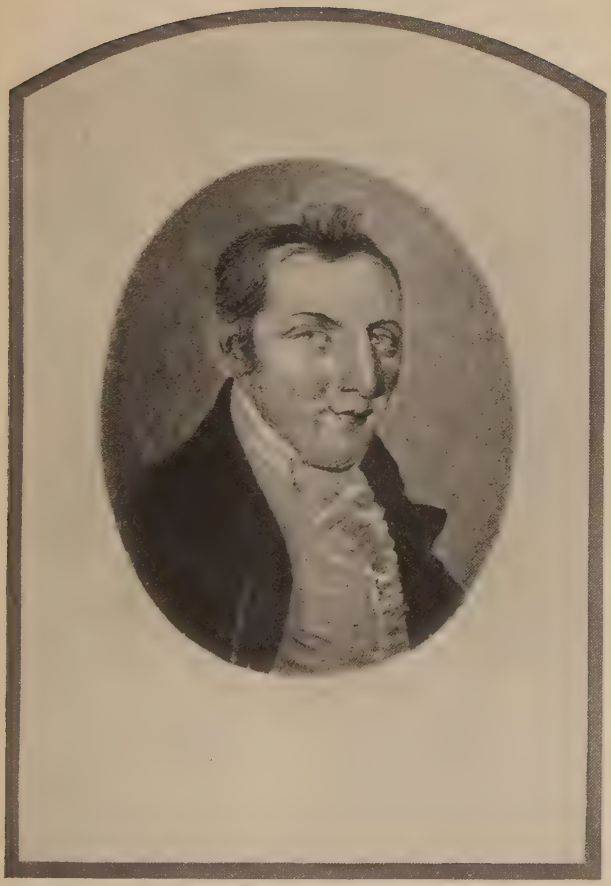
It was in 1810, and when in his twenty-ninth year that Alexander Smith, after several tentative efforts at soldiering and farming, set up as a merchant in Grantown, and soon afterwards met and won Barbara, the daughter of Donald Stuart, of the Manor of Leth-na-Coyle (Lainchoil), in the neigh-

[1] C. Rampini, LL.B., *Moray and Nairn.*

boring parish of Abernethy.[1] The young lady's mother was also a Grant — Janet, the daughter of Robert Grant, of Cromdale.

All this wild district of Strathspey had been peopled exclusively by the Grant clan for so long a period that few landowners held possession there who did not bear the name of Grant. When, about the middle of the eighteenth century, Baron Grant of Elchies proposed to sell his estates in Strathspey, Sir Ludovick Grant was anxious to secure them, either for himself or for one of the clan. In a letter, still extant, to his law agent, he wrote that he wished to preserve "all the lands between the two Craigellachies in the name of Grant." Conspicuous throughout Strathspey are these two rocky eminences. The upper or western Craigellachie forms the dividing boundary between Badenoch and Strathspey and was the rendezvous of the Clan Grant in time of war. The lower height stands at the confluence of the Fiddich with the Spey, and forms the point of contact of the parishes of Aberlour, Knockando, Bothes, and Boharm. The upper Craigellachie is commonly believed to have furnished the crest of the Grant family, which is a

[1] Donald Stuart, of Lainchoil, had four sons, John, Peter, Robert, and William. Peter joined the army, retired with the rank of lieutenant and became Fort Major of Belfast. He had a large family. William went to London and in course of time entered, writes his grand-niece, Mrs. Lewis, "a very select and small woollen business in the West Country. The firm was called Bevan and Stuart. He had no sons, but two daughters, who were lost sight of in the course of time. Of the several daughters of Donald Stuart, the youngest was Margaret, who, when about twenty or twenty-two, left on a voyage to some distant connections in the Orkneys. The ship was lost and all on board were drowned."



ALEXANDER SMITH
Lord Strathcona's father

mountain in flames. When the chief wished the clan to assemble, fires were kindled on both Craigellachies, hence the name, "Rock of Alarm." The war-cry of the clan was, "Stand fast, Craigellachie," and this was the legend on their armorial motto. We shall have occasion hereafter to note a pleasant dramatic touch, worthy of one of the old minstrels, in the recurrence of this Grant slogan in the epic of one of their descendants.

The Stuarts (or Stewarts) also were considerable folk in the countryside; so that this match might be considered a most advantageous one for Alexander Smith. Two of Barbara Stuart's brothers had gone in the service of one of the great fur-trading companies then striving for ascendancy in North America. Another brother was in the army, and two cousins were in the East Indies. The case of the Stuarts, for fifty years or more, was typical of the emigration which had been going on in Strathspey.

Our parish [writes the Reverend Dr. Forsyth, minister of Abernethy] has continued to give some of its best blood to other lands. We have sent bankers to England, farmers to Ireland, and parsons to every county in the Highlands. We have sent settlers to Canada and the United States, shepherds to Fiji, stock-keepers to New Zealand, gold-diggers to Australia, diamond merchants to Africa, doctors to the army and navy, and soldiers to fight our cause in all parts of the world.

What is thus said of Strathspey was true of the whole shire.

Men from Moray [testified Lord Strathcona early in the next century] were to be found in all parts of the world. In Canada there were many of them doing their part nobly in extending, in building up, and in consolidating that great Empire of which they were all so proud — and he believed if there was one thing more than another that had helped the people of Scotland, in days gone by, it was that they had had a better system of education than existed in any other part of the world.[1]

But Alexander, for one, had no intention of leaving his native land. The betrothal between himself and Barbara Stuart proved to be a long one; they were not married until 1813.

After the birth of a daughter, Margaret, and a son christened John Stuart, after a famous uncle, of whom I shall shortly have occasion to speak, the Smiths removed to the town of Forres. Here, on the 6th of August, 1820, another son, the subject of this memoir and destined to become the future financial statesman and philanthropist, first saw the light. Upon this second son were bestowed the maternal and paternal family names of Donald Alexander.[2] The house, demolished a few years ago to make room for local improvements, closely adjoined the two-arched bridge spanning the swiftly flowing stream or burn of the Mosset, which, mingling with

[1] Speech at eighty-first anniversary of the Edinburgh Morayshire Club, January 20, 1905.

[2] He never forgot the significance of his baptismal names. "If," he wrote to Miss Mactavish, after receiving his knighthood in 1886, "Donald is 'a proud chieftain,' I shall not lose sight of Alexander who is, you know, 'a helper of men.'"

the broader waters of the Findhorn, empties into the estuary of Moray Firth. It was a simple but solid structure, tenanted latterly by lowly folk, but considered a century since as suitable for the home of a middle-class family.[1]

The cottage [said a local writer at Lord Strathcona's death] from the architectural point of view was unpretentious, but by virtue of the great career of the man it had cradled, it found a warm place in the affections of Forresians, and four or five years ago, when a fairly extensive scheme of town-planning was being carried out in the vicinity, it was decided to let the old house stand. For some time it did. Other old cottages, and more modern buildings, not to mention a bridge close on a hundred years of age, fell before the demolishing contractors, and when the new buildings went up, Strathcona's "theeckit" cottage remained in the centre of a modernized corner of the town. But it also had ultimately to go; commercial necessity in the shape of a widened street overruled sentiment, and Forres lost a familiar landmark.

Two at least of Mrs. Smith's relatives were already at Forres; James Stuart, who was studying law in the office of Mr. Webster, the town clerk,[2]

[1] "People," Lord Strathcona said in his old age, "speak of that stone cottage on the Mosset as if it were a very lowly dwelling, indeed; but compared to any house I dwelt in until I came to Montreal in my forty-eighth year it was almost a palace. It was of stone, and substantially built, with very thick walls."

[2] "My grandfather Stuart had been apprenticed as a lawyer in Forres, and his fellow apprentice, Webster, sat as member for the town of Aberdeen in the same Parliament as that in which I first sat. I have heard my grandfather relate that he learned to write in the soft peat ashes in his father's house. His father lived in the neighborhood of Forres at Broom Hill. My grandfather rode from Forres

and Mr. Cumming, of Logie, who dwelt in a picturesquely situated place near Forres, on the banks of the Findhorn. The surrounding scenery is very attractive, and even in Donald Smith's childhood there were said to be more country gentlemen's seats in the immediate neighbourhood than in any other part of the country.

Barbara Stuart — for, according to the Scottish practice, there were many who spoke of her thus, long after her marriage — was a comely woman, of strong, quiet character, and simple piety. In his old age, her son often reverted to the lessons she had taught him — lessons of gentleness and patience and conduct.

Her voice was low, and she disliked loud noises. She was not nervous, but if a door slammed or a heavy object fell, she closed her eyes with a smile as of suppressed pain. She set great store by courtesy and good manners and our bonnets were always off in her presence. She insisted on a scrupulous cleanliness in house, person and apparel, and herself set an example of perfect neatness in dress.[1]

Mrs. Smith was a constant reader of the Bible, and of the Scottish divines, and it was at her knee

to Edinburgh on a Highland pony, and sold it when he got to Edinburgh and began housekeeping on the proceeds. He was articled to a Mr. Gordon, who soon after had a paralytic stroke, after which Mrs. Gordon and my grandfather carried on his business. Many years later, when I was an undergraduate at Cambridge, I visited her at Shelford, when she spoke of my grandfather as 'Little Sandy Stuart.' My grandfather remembered when all the judges and barristers rode on horseback to the Circuit Court of Inveraray." (James Stuart, M.P., *Reminiscences*.)

[1] Donald A. Smith to Robert Hamilton, 1874.

that Donald learned at a very early age many of those metrical versions of the Psalms so dear to the North, one of which he repeated "without error, pause, or confusion" on his death-bed nearly ninety years later.

The memory of these paraphrases, learned in childhood, was often with him. Once, in middle life, while ill in Newfoundland, he told the friend who nursed him [1] that he had spent the whole of one night recalling dozens of stanzas, and another night in repeating passages of Livy's history, and found that while more recent acquirements had faded away, these he could recall with ease.

To one of his guests at Glencoe,[2] when the conversation turned on the question of public speaking, Lord Strathcona remarked that on one occasion, when unexpectedly called upon to respond to the toast of himself, there came into his head the following paraphrase, which he straightway repeated and which was received by the audience when they had recovered from their surprise, with marked appreciation:—

"O happy is the man who hears
Instruction's warning voice,
And who celestial wisdom makes
His earthly only choice.

"For she has treasures greater far
Than east or west unfold,
And her rewards more precious are
Than all their stores of gold.

[1] Captain Nathan Norman.
[2] The Honourable Thomas McKenzie, High Commissioner for New Zealand.

"In her right hand she holds to view
A length of happy days;
Riches, with splendid honors join'd
Are what her left displays.

"She guides the young with innocence
In pleasure's path to tread;
A crown of glory she bestows
Upon the hoary head.

"According as her labors rise,
So other rewards increase;
Her ways are ways of pleasantness
And all her paths are peace."

Poverty is a relative term and the Smiths were no poorer than many thousands of their intelligent countrymen at that period who led regular, contented and respectable lives on a fraction of what English folk of the same class thought indispensable. Education for their sons at a private school would probably have been beyond their means. Happily, a resource had lately been established in Forres. One Jonathan Anderson, a native of the town, who, like many of his neighbours, had wandered afar and acquired a small fortune, bequeathed, some years before Donald's birth, the lands of Cowlairs, now forming part of the city of Glasgow, for the purpose of creating a school and paying a teacher at Forres. His design was that the children of necessitous parents in his native parish and those of Rafford and Kinloss should be "instructed in reading, writing, arithmetic, and such branches of education as the Provost, Magistrates, and Town Council should deem proper." The Anderson

Institution, a building in the Grecian style, was erected in 1824, and both John and Donald were amongst the earliest pupils. The latter's youthful traits at that time were those appropriate to his later character. A fellow pupil describes him as of a shy and proud disposition, not without a fund of sturdy resolution and even hardihood when occasion demanded it. When Donald was nine years old, the rivers Findhorn and Spey broke their boundaries and flooded the country. Many of the peasant folk with their families came into Forres to seek relief, and among them the parents of one of Donald's childish playmates, who was drowned. After school Donald called on the bereaved family, and "with a gravity far beyond his years, condoled with them, and on leaving begged that they would accept a slight token in memory of his friend. He handed them over all of his pocket-money, amounting to a shilling and some odd coppers." Thus was the child father to the man.

The Master of this institution of learning professed to be a great Shakespearean scholar, and was especially fond of quoting from *Macbeth*.[1] His

[1] "He was very severe," Lord Strathcona once recalled, "on Southern ignorance in pronouncing 'Dunsinane' with the accent on the last syllable, and always quoted the famous passage as

"'Till Birnam forest to Dunsinnan come.'"

In his *Reminiscences*, Mr. James Stuart relates the following anecdote, told by his grandfather and namesake, of Forres: —

"Mrs. Siddons was brought to play in Edinburgh, principally by the intervention of a certain Lord of Session, called Lord Dunsinane. She played Lady Macbeth. At the point where Macbeth refers to the old prophecy, 'Till Birnam forest come to Dunsinane,' the words were markedly altered, 'Till Birnam forest to Dunsinane come' — with the accent on the second syllable, Shakespeare's pronunciation

father had met Dr. Johnson on his Scottish itinerary, and naturally cherished a large number of anecdotes of that illustrious man, which he bequeathed to his descendants. As these were retailed to the school on all possible occasions, the pupils might have been forgiven for sometimes confusing the itinerant lexicographer with the royal murderer, as was actually done on one occasion by a boy named Robertson.

The pupils of the school were allowed as a great treat to ascend the Nelson Tower, and Robertson, one of the biggest boys at Anderson's, who did so for the first time, was greatly struck by the view.

"Look!" he cried, "yon is where auld Dr. Johnson poisoned puir Banquo."

Such an exhibition of crass ignorance was received by the group in silence, prompted by a wholesome dread of Robertson's temper. But it was more than Donald could stand; he laughed Robertson to scorn, who became incensed, and threatened a thrashing. Donald stood his ground manfully, as he afterwards did in fur-trading camp and legislature, the ignoramus found himself unsupported, and the threatened chastisement did not take place.

Certain holidays were spent at Findhorn and Abernethy, and upon these vacations Donald and his brother looked back with pleasure. But it was in the society of his elder sister, Margaret, that Donald's happiest moments were spent. She ap-

of the word being wrong. It was generally recognized that the change was at the instigation of Mrs. Siddons. Lord Dunsinane was present and the incident pleased the Scottish people very much, and brought down the house in prolonged applause."

pears to have been a most attractive girl, with rare qualities of both head and heart. In one of his letters her uncle, John Stuart, with whom she is said to have been a great favourite, asks if "Maggie's golden curls are as lustrous and her face as bonny as ever."

To intelligence and considerable mental acquirements she joined an ambition to excel in study, an ambition probably foiled by the scant opportunities then existing for female education as compared with those open to her brothers. Nearly half a century after her death, we find her elder brother John suggesting that it was a thought of their sister Margaret which had inspired Donald to found a great college for women in his adopted city.[1]

For many years Mrs. Smith had continued to receive long and interesting letters from her only surviving brother, the daring and successful fur-trader, formerly of the North-West Fur Company of Montreal.

In the cottage at Forres, we are told, hung a water-colour drawing of Stuart Lake. This great body of water, fifty miles long, and dotted with islands, situated amidst the wild and majestic mountain scenery of New Caledonia, had been named, with the stream flowing out of and together with it, in John Stuart's honour. For in 1808 he had been the intrepid companion of Simon Fraser in that series of explorations which revealed

[1] To this suggestion he replied (September 19, 1889): "You are right in thinking that in the matter of this college, the memory of our sister Margaret was present to my mind. You well remember her gifts and her ambition to become a scholar."

to the world the long-hidden marvels of the vast fertile country on the Pacific side of the continent, which is to-day known as British Columbia.[1]

After the discovery of a noble stream, called by them the Fraser, draining a country nearly as large as Italy and containing some of the finest forests in the world, the two friends followed its course onward to the Pacific Ocean.[2]

The exploits of John Stuart (who is frequently mentioned in Washington Irving's *Astoria*), his travels, his opinions, and his friends, were naturally a chief topic in the family circle. What wonder

[1] "Entering this region of Titanic irregularities, where scarped and hoary mountains, rising bald-headed into the clouds, play fantastic tricks with worried rivers, and whose blue lakes, lapped by pine-clad steeps flinging huge boulders from craggy fronts into the valleys below, call to mind the lochs and bens of their boyhood, naturally enough they call this far north-west mountain land New Caledonia, and love to compare these heights with their own Scotch Highlands, and so fancy themselves not so very far from home after all." (Bancroft, *History of the North-West Coast.*)

[2] "In comparing these two persons I should call Stuart the nobler, the more dignified man, but one whose broad, calm intellect had received no more culture than Fraser's. Stuart's courage and powers of endurance were equal in every respect to those of his colleague, and while in temper, tongue, ideas, and bodily motion he was less hasty, within a given time he would accomplish as much or more than Fraser, and do it better. Both were exceedingly eccentric, one quietly so, the other in a more demonstrative way; but it happened that the angularities of one so dovetailed with those of the other that coöperation, harmony, and good-fellowship characterized all their intercourse. Stuart was one of the senior partners of the North-West Company, and for a time was in charge of the Athabasca Department. As his territory on the west was boundless he deemed it his duty to extend the limits of his operations. Twice he traversed the continent, besides multitudes of minor excursions. In fact he was almost always on the move. On retiring from the service he settled at Forres, Scotland, where he died in 1846." (Anderson's North-West Coast, MS., quoted by Bancroft.)

if that sketch of the remote Stuart Lake, "gemmed with islands and girt with mountain masses and primeval forests," told of an enchanted region to his small nephew, Donald Smith? Since Stuart's participation in the Astoria events of 1813, he had frequently changed his station and was now, since the famous Coalition with the Hudson's Bay Company in 1821, Chief Factor at Lesser Slave Lake. In the Indian country he had married a half-breed girl who had soon died, leaving him an only son, whom he placed first at the Edinburgh Academy and afterwards with a tutor in London.

Years before Mrs. Smith had mourned the loss of another brother, Robert Stuart, also in the service of the North-West Company, and also famous for his courage and ability. His death was tragic. Sailing one day down the Columbia River, his canoe was upset, and he and his three companions were flung into the water. A temporary refuge was furnished by a rock, but Stuart was the only swimmer of the four, and he was, therefore, the only one to whom they could turn for assistance.

He bade them be of good cheer — that, if God permitted, he would save them. Then, taking one of them on his back, he struck out for the shore. His enterprise was successful, so far as the first and second were concerned; but his further efforts to save the third man cost him his life. His strength had ebbed, and he and the companion he bore sank in the mighty rush of waters and were never heard of again.[1]

In those days, when the rivalry between the

[1] Letter of John Stuart to William MacGillivray.

Hudson's Bay Company and the North-West Company was at red heat, others of Donald's relations played important and stirring parts. There was one famous fur-trader, Cuthbert Grant, and another, Cuthbert Cumming, who were both cousins of his mother.[1] It will be seen, therefore, that Rupert's Land and New Caledonia, though by oceans divided and a world of seas, formed no terra incognita to at least one household in Forres.

When Donald Smith was in his sixteenth year, there came home on furlough the adventurous uncle whose career as a famous pioneer in the Far West shone like a guiding star in the firmament of young Donald's most ardent desires. Being taken into the family councils he promptly decided that his nephew's desire to leave school and earn his own livelihood was a most reasonable one, and ought to be encouraged. But he appeared by no means enthusiastic about his entering the service of the Hudson's Bay Company. "A rough life," he explained, "and miserably slow of promotion and uncertain of proper reward." He thought Donald had rather the makings of a lawyer in him. However, he advised waiting a year or so and if his nephew was still of the same mind he would, on his return, take him with him to London and introduce

[1] "If they had the good fortune to get off with their lives, it was owing to the humane feelings of Mr. Cuthbert Grant, a native of the soil, who, placing himself, at the risk of his own life, between the North-West party and the settlers, kept the former at bay by his daring and determined conduct, and saved the latter; for which meritorious and timely interference the settlement owes him a debt of gratitude which it can never repay." (Ross, *Fur-Hunters of the Far West.*)

him to one or the other of the Directors. Meanwhile, after a brief sojourn in Forres, where the old gentleman charmed every one by his agreeable manners, Stuart departed for London. His son Donald, destined for the military profession, was then in the hands of a tutor. Leaving him, Stuart went on an extensive continental tour of which we shall hear anon.

Following the counsels of his uncle, Donald Smith left school, where he had distinguished himself both in Latin and mathematics, and entered the office of Mr. Robert Watson, the town clerk of Forres. Thereafter the Burgh Registers of Sasines and Town's Chartularies (as they are called) contained many pages of his handiwork, each entry, in Latin or English, being followed by the statement, "Written by Donald Smith." He studied law, too, to some purpose, as many passages in an old notebook, drawn from Erskine's *Law of Scotland*, attest. One of these written in a neat, almost precise character, dated February 2, 1838, is not without an ulterior significance to students of Lord Strathcona's life: —

Under the sanction of the law may be also included that part of it which proposes rewards, as encouragements to obedience. Cumberland, c. 5, De leg. nat. & 40, maintains, that is the chief and most proper sanction of a law. But his reasoning appears too subtle, and it is certain that this species of sanction is but little in the power of earthly law givers. No state can possibly furnish out a stock sufficient for rewarding all who may live in due observance of the laws; it is God alone who can only inflict the severest pains upon

transgressors, but also from the inexhaustible treasures of his power and goodness, animate his creatures to obedience by the highest rewards.

Voluntary servants are those who enter into service without compulsion, by an agreement or covenant, for a determinate time; either simply, for bed, board and clothing, or also for wages. Under voluntary servants may be included apprentices, who engage to serve under a merchant, artificer, or manufacturer for a determinate number of years, on condition, that the master shall in that time, instruct them in the knowledge of his particular art or profession.

All masters have a power of moderate chastisement over their servants whether voluntary or necessary; and the masters of public work-houses are allowed to go all lengths in correction, life and torture excepted.

It soon became manifest that the slow processes of the law were an ill road to fortune for Donald Smith. As the months passed it was felt that he ought to be turning his talent for industry, his penmanship and knowledge of bookkeeping to better, or at least more immediate account. A pair of wealthy and highly esteemed merchants named Grant, cousins of the Smith family, had settled in the town of Manchester. To them Mrs. Smith wrote for advice in settling this question of her son's future career.

These Grants of Manchester were high-minded, generous, and warm-hearted, and they have a very interesting association with literature. Charles Dickens, in the early flush of his success, chanced to meet them during a visit to Manchester, and introduced them into his novel of *Nicholas Nickleby*

DONALD A. SMITH, 1838

under the name of the "Cheeryble Brothers." Lord Strathcona's paternal grandmother was the sister of Mrs. Grant, the mother of these *par nobile fratrum;* and what the mother was to the sons is set forth, as readers of the novel will remember, in the description of the dinner given by the Cheerybles in honor of the birthday of Tim Linkinwater, their confidential clerk.

"Brother Charles," said one Cheeryble to the other, "my dear fellow, my dear fellow, there is another association connected with this day which must never be forgotten by you and me. This day, which brought into the world a most faithful and excellent and exemplary fellow, took from it the kindest and very best parent to us both. I wish that she could have seen us both in our prosperity and shared it, and had the happiness of knowing how dearly we loved her in it, as we did when we were poor boys. My dear brother — The Memory of our Mother!"

To Mrs. Smith's application the reply came that there was a vacancy in the office of the Grants which the young man might fill, and that though the position was humble, there would be a prosperous course open to him if he showed capacity and industry. Such an opening promised a wider outlook and greater opportunities than could be afforded by settling down in the narrow groove of a town clerk's office, even in the hopes of some day becoming a Writer to the Signet. But even this chance was not all. Another relative, named M'Grigor, in the East India Company's service, wrote offering to befriend his cousin Donald, and obtain for

him, if he wished it, a junior writership in the Company. While the youth hesitated, there came from the Continent a letter from his uncle John Stuart announcing that he had resolved on retirement from the Hudson's Bay Company, that he was then *en route* to London, and that if his nephew still contemplated a career in Canada, he would do his best to obtain for him a junior clerkship in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company, or some other advantageous opening in Canada, through one or the other of his many friends there. In a few weeks' time he would be in London and invited his nephew to visit him at his Clerkenwell lodgings and again discuss the situation.

Promptly the die was cast, and Donald Smith resolved forthwith to turn his steps towards the English capital. Meanwhile, Donald's elder brother, John, had already embarked on a medical career. He soon afterwards obtained an appointment in the East India Company's service, and throughout a long life as an army surgeon was accounted an able and painstaking officer. Thereafter the career of the two brothers lay half a world apart and they corresponded but rarely. Many Anglo-Indians still alive recall Dr. Smith, whom they describe as a handsome man and very fastidious as to his personal appearance.[1] In their old age

[1] For example, under date of 30th November, 1878, Field Marshal Sir Donald Stewart, writing of the hardships of an Indian campaign, observes: "I have begun to grow a beard; every one in camp has given up razors except myself and Dr. Smith, my chief medical officer, *a great swell in his way and very good-looking*. He and I are the only two in camp who have white collars." (G. R. Elmslie *Life of Field Marshal Sir Donald Stewart*).

the physical likeness between the two brothers became far greater than it had been in their youth.

It may conveniently be mentioned here that after the terrible scourge of smallpox had, in 1841, carried off two of their daughters, Margaret and Marianne, the Smith family, after so long a residence in Forres, returned to Strathspey. In his native parish of Knockando, Alexander Smith died in 1847. Many years afterward Donald's mother and another sister, Jane, returned to Forres and lived there from 1865 until Mrs. Smith's death in 1874. On the latter occasion he was present at the funeral and carried through the executry.[1]

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[1] On a tombstone in Forres Churchyard, erected to the memory of Lord Strathcona's parents and a brother and sisters, there is carved the following inscription: —

This stone with enclosure is erected
by
John Stuart Smith
and
Donald Alexander Smith
To mark the place where lie interred their
father,
Alexander Smith,
who died at Archieston, Knockando, on 3rd
March, 1847, aged 66 years;
And their mother,
Barbara Stuart,
who died at Forres on the 18th of April, 1874,
in her 90th year;
Also their brother and sisters, who all died at Forres
or neighbourhood,
James M'Gregor on the 29th October, 1826
aged 3
Margaret, on the 12th January, 1841, aged 27;
And
Marianne, on the 14th December, 1841, aged
16 years.

NOTE TO CHAPTER I

The story of the Grants of Manchester is a romantic one. William Grant, the elder, occupied the farm of "The Haugh" at Elchies, in Knockando, adjoining that of his first cousin, Alexander Smith, Lord Strathcona's father. Grant was engaged in the precarious trade of "droving," that is, buying cattle in the country and taking them south for sale. The years 1782–83 were notably bad seasons: he had gone south with a drove, but failed to sell at Falkirk. Pressing on across the border into Lancashire, he still found no market, and footsore and weary, passed the night with his son William on the summit of a high hill. In the morning he sprang up, and overlooking the fair valley of the Irwell, bathed in sunshine, cried out, "Ah, this is paradise! Here I would like to have my home." "Vain," comments Dr. Forsyth, "as the wish seemed to this poor Highlander, a stranger in a strange yet beautiful land, yet it was to prove true. In this very spot he and his family settled, and by honest industry built up a huge business that ranked them amongst the merchant princes of Manchester."

"My father," wrote his son, William Grant, junior, "was a dealer in cattle and lost his property in the year 1783. He got a letter of introduction to Mr. Arkwright (afterwards Sir Richard and owner of one of the only two mills in Manchester), and came by way of Skipton to Manchester, accompanied by me. . . . We called upon Mr. Arkwright, but he had so many applications at the time he could not employ him. My father then applied to a Mr. Dinwiddie, a Scotch gentleman, who knew him in his prosperity, and who was a printer and manufacturer near Bury. He agreed

to give my father employment, and placed my brother James and me in situations where we had an opportunity of acquiring a knowledge both of manufacturing and printing [cotton]; and offered me a partnership when I had completed my apprenticeship. I declined this offer, and commenced business for myself on a small scale, assisted by my brothers, John, Daniel, and Charles.

"In 1818 we purchased Springside, and in 1827 we purchased the Park estate and erected a monument to commemorate my father's visit to this valley; and on the very spot where he and I stood admiring the beautiful scenery below."

Mr. Grant adds, "We attribute much of our prosperity, under Divine Providence, to the good example and good counsel of our worthy parents."

In truth, their mother, Mrs. Grant, *née* MacKenzie, appears to have been a woman of rare character and piety, as was her sister, Lord Strathcona's grandmother. The description given by Dickens of the birthday festival of the "Brothers" to their confidential clerk, "Tim Linkinwater," has already been referred to in the text.

CHAPTER II

DEPARTURE FOR CANADA

1838

To-day, amidst the drab wilderness of Clerkenwell, in its grimy tenements, shops and warehouses, we should as soon expect to find lodgings suitable for the portly and humorous old fur-trader, John Stuart, as for his dapper and benevolent contemporary in that quarter of the town, Mr. Samuel Pickwick. The polite areas of London have been readjusted and a modern chronicler, bestowing any regard upon the fitness of locality, would hesitate ere he lodged either hero farther east than Bloomsbury.

In estimating the marvellous race of Scotsmen produced early in the last century, English social tests and prejudices are manifestly absurd. Many whose sires had been simple farmers or artisans were in manners, education and pride comparable to Englishmen of the upper middle class. John Stuart was essentially a gentleman. He was more—he was even a courtier: for he once composed an ode in praise of the princely virtues of His Majesty George the Fourth. Dignified, pleasant-mannered, fond of conversation, he could scarcely fail to be esteemed in any company. There was the agreeable excitement of paradox to learn that this affable Highland laird — as he appeared to be — had been for forty years trading peltries with Red Indians in

JOHN STUART

the icy solitudes of Rupert's Land.[1] Yet such as he was, Stuart might easily have been matched by many of his fur-trading associates of the Old Régime. The type has to-day all but vanished, never to return. Into Stuart's epistolary style, as well as his private life, on his return to his native land, a glimpse is afforded by the following lengthy letter, addressed to his kinsman, Alexander Stewart, also a Chief Factor in the Hudson's Bay Company: —

John Stuart to Alexander Stewart

London, 15th February, 1836.

Alexander Stewart, Esq.

My dear Sir, — It was a disappointment to me not to have heard from you by any of the arrivals from Canada. I had, however, much satisfaction in being informed by our friend Simon MacGillivray,[2] whom I see daily, that you continue in the enjoyment of good health; and I sincerely hope you may long continue to enjoy that greatest of earthly blessings — the only thing that is much worth caring for. I think with the exception of fifteen days (eight of which I was confined to my bed) at Edinburgh, I scarcely ever enjoyed better health in my life. Old friends both here and in Scotland tell me that I look better and not older than when I was here before in 1819.

I have been *on the go* since my first arrival here, 27th

[1] Washington Irving, who in *Astoria* has spoken of his brother Robert Stuart so handsomely, once referred to John Stuart as the "Chesterfield of the Wilderness."

[2] Brother of William MacGillivray, chief partner of the old North West Company and its agent in London, before the coalition with the Hudson's Bay Company in 1821.

October, having travelled over great part of England, most of Scotland and no small part of Ireland; but my plan was in some measure deranged by my sickness and my time being limited I could not protract my stay so as to have called on your friends, a circumstance that I regret much; but if I live ever to see Scotland again you may rest assured that they will be among the first I will visit there. In my excursion I saw our friend Haldane, and I am certain that he looks far better and younger than when I saw him in the Columbia in 1821. He is quite comfortable, lives like a nobleman, and you can't imagine how kind and attentive he was to me. Without any knowledge of mine he mentioned my being returned to the country to Mr. Leith, a brother of James Leith, who had the kindness to call on me and I had the satisfaction to dine with him yesterday. He is of the house of Sir Charles Forbes, and one of the most gentlemanly men I ever saw and so excessively obliging that I cannot express the half of his kindness to me. He has a maiden and a widow sister living with him at present; but they pass the summer in the vicinity of Elgin and are acquainted with several of my friends there. They are fine women, equally kind with their brother, and pressed me that when I go to Scotland and remain in the vicinity of Elgin I will make their residence my home. This, together with the intimacy I have the honour to have with one or two other families of respectability here, ensures me an advantage that is not common at the Hudson's Bay House, and although I have not intruded on their kindness or been present at any Committee meeting, I have so far no cause to complain. Every request of mine has been complied with, and really I could not if I was to attempt it earn the kind attention I experience from Mr.

Simpson [1] whom I see daily perhaps half a dozen times, mostly at my own lodgings, and if we were supposed sometimes to be on good terms and intimate while at York Factory, I now consider that we are much more so, and for the simple reason we are here more on an equality. I think that I know him better than most people, and am satisfied that when left to himself, unbiassed, to follow the dictates of his good heart, there cannot be a more kind or better man; but he is alike easily influenced by the flattery and prejudice of others, and when once aroused, excitable and without much reflection, will go any lengths.

I had almost forgot that at Belfast [2] I had the very great satisfaction of seeing our old friend Mr. McLeod and it is wonderful how well he stands it out. His hair is a little grey, but in other respects there is scarcely any alteration — and although not in that affluence in which he once was, he appears to be comfortable and gives good dinners. He has two fine daughters, but has had the misfortune lately to have lost the eldest. Her poor mother, who is still an invalid, was near perishing in going to see her, and arrived only at Mull, which she did in sufficient time to

[1] Later Sir George Simpson, Governor-in-Chief of Rupert's Land.

[2] Where his brother Peter Stuart had long been Fort Major.

"My grandfather," writes his granddaughter, Mrs. Lewis, of Belfast, to me, "was Fort Major of Belfast for a very long period. I saw him on my first visit to Ireland in 1861, when he had retired many years, being then in his ninety-third year. He died in 1863. . . . When I was six years old, in 1846, our grand-uncle, John Stuart, visited us at Clapham. I have a most distinct remembrance of him, with his well-shaped head, pink complexion, and snow-white hair. When I saw his nephew, Lord Strathcona, a dozen years ago, it struck me he was very like grand-uncle John; both he and his brother, Dr. Stuart Smith, were of the same type as my grand-uncle."

witness the remains of her daughter. What a spectacle for a poor mother!

I have also seen Simon MacGillivray, and if royalty no longer visits his house many of the nobility are frequent guests there. He enjoys good health; but the South American climate appears to have altered his frame and he also has grey hair. I was near forgetting that I was much pleased with my excursion, and when I tell you in the whole extent of my travels I passed not through any place of note where I had not either relatives, old acquaintances or good introductions to persons who were attentive, I need scarcely add that I was delighted. It is the only time in my life in which I may be said to have enjoyed myself, and as I have laid all mercenary trouble aside I converse with equal freedom with all classes, and if I have not the name of having the *ton*, the bluntness of my manners do not seem to displease either male or female.

I now find that I have written nearly a sheet without having entered on any of the topics I intended to make the subject of this letter. In the first place, you have been advising me not to resign, nor have I, yet I would consider it a great favour from you were you to acquaint me on what terms Mr. Clark (who I understand is doing very well and not misspending his means) has resigned. The knowledge of it may be of use to me when the proper time comes. At present I have got a leave of absence until the summer of 1837. and am preparing to go to the Continent and try what effect the fine climate of Nice, of Piedmont, and of Savoy may have in recruiting my shattered frame. If I find the climate congenial I will likely remain a twelve-month, and may extend the excursion to Genoa, Corfu, the Ionian Islands, and Malta where I have

some friends or a good introduction — and if I had a travelling companion I have little doubt but I could pass the time agreeably, but such a thing is not easily to be had. There is, however, a practicability that either James Leith or James Keith or perhaps both may go. At least I hold that the state of Mr. Keith's health will not admit of his returning to Canada and that Sieveright[1] is to remain in charge at Le Chat.

Mr. Leith lives in Devonshire, about two hundred miles from there. His friends wish him to accompany me, and I am to pay him a visit and try my own influence. Mr. McTavish I think is not so great a favourite as in America — like some others now that matters are placed in order. He is not to have the Chats, but will have either Fort Coulonge or leave of absence as he may prefer.

Captain Back,[2] like a man of honour, has acted nobly to Roderick McLeod, has been in conference with the Committee and extorted the promise of a Factorship which is to be made out in March. I have not seen Captain Back since, but I mean to call tomorrow and thank him. In November I saw him frequently. He introduced me to his sister and was immensely kind. He has been promoted by order of council, I believe the third instance of the kind that ever occurred, and stands very high in public estimation.

My cousin enjoys good health and desires to be kindly remembered to you. Donald also I am happy to say is well and a fine-looking boy. I am not competent to judge myself, but he is said also to be a good scholar, is now reading Sallust and Virgil in Latin, and has made some progress in both Greek and French

[1] Frequently mentioned in Irving's *Astoria*.
[2] The Arctic explorer.

besides doing drilling, etc. I had some thought of taking him along with me to the continent and placing him in the seminary where Napoleon received his education, but his tutor strongly recommended that he should be kept for one year more under him, and as my cousin also, who has the rearing of him, is of the same opinion, I have consented to allow him to remain and I have not seen him since I came last to town, but will in the course of a few days.

I am going this evening to the House of Commons to witness the defence of O'Connell and if I am back in time will give my opinion of that celebrated agitator; but that is neither worth your while nor mine.

There was a sale in December and beaver sold tolerably, but rats miserably, averaging not a sixpence each. I do not write Robertson because a letter from me will not to him be worth the postage. Remember me kindly both to him and his amiable wife, my dear Nancy. When you write me address under cover to Sir James McGrigor, of Campden Hill, Bart., Army Medical Department, and let the packet to him be unopened, not sealed, and addressed to the care of the Right Hon'ble the Secretary-at-War, which will save postage.

I will now bid you farewell in the fond hopes that your health may improve and in the assurance that whether I will return to the Indian country or not, I will, if God spares me, keep my promise and go out to Canada to see my friends. Remember me kindly to every individual comprising your fine family and rest assured that I am unalterably,

My dear sir,

Yours most truly and sincerely,

JOHN STUART.

His Uncle's Return

Agreeably to the designs expressed in the foregoing letter, Stuart left for the Continent, in company with his friend and former fur-trading associate, James Leith.[1] During the ensuing year and a half at many a lonely station in Rupert's Land there came letters from Stuart descriptive of his travels. He informs Chief Factor Peter Ogden that while in Rome he had read a chapter of Gibbon amidst the ruins of the Coliseum. He was at Malta when news of the death of King William arrived and the accession of the young Princess Victoria. "The new system of four years of absence has become quite fashionable," observes Ogden, in a letter from Western Caledonia, dated February 27, 1837. "Our old friend, John Stuart, is dashing away on the Continent after his long sojourn in the Indian country. I fear he will yet die a poor man. He was always most extravagant." [2]

[1] Chief Factor James Leith was originally appointed a clerk from Aberdeen. On his death in 1849, Mr. Leith bequeathed the sum of £10,000 "for the purpose of establishing, propagating, and extending the Christian Protestant religion in and amongst the native aboriginal Indians of Rupert's land." The executors were the Bishop of London, the Dean of Westminster, the Governor and Deputy of the Hudson's Bay Company and the testator's brother Mr. William Leith. The money became lodged in Chancery and was committed to the Bishop of Rupert's Land by the Court of Chancery upon the understanding that the Company would add to the Bishop's income a salary of £300 per annum and provide him with a residence. In 1857 Sir George Simpson stated that the fund with accumulations of interest amounted to £13,345.

[2] Robertson MSS. "Mr. Peter Ogden was nearly related to a high judicial functionary and in early life was destined for the same profession. The study of provincial jurisprudence and the signorial subdivisions of Canadian property had no charms for the mercurial temperament of Mr. Ogden, and contrary to the wishes of his friends, he preferred the wild and untrammelled life of an Indian trader to

When at length, early in 1838, Stuart returned to England and to his lodgings in Clerkenwell, he had finally resolved upon retirement. Amongst the letters awaiting his arrival was one from his sister Barbara Smith, of Forres, expressing the pleasure she felt at his decision to pass the remainder of his days in dignified ease. "Springfield," [1] she wrote, "was untenanted and there was no prescription better to be recommended than that of breathing his native air again." Her younger son Donald had finally resolved to abandon the law, and was considering the proposal to enter the establishment of their Grant cousins, at Manchester, when his uncle's letter came. He was now fixed upon trying his fortunes in Canada, either with the Hudson's

the 'law's delay' and the wholesome restraints which are provided for the correction of over-exuberant spirits in civilized society. His accounts of his various *rencontres* with Orkney men and Indians would fill a moderate-sized octavo, and if reduced to writing would undoubtedly stagger the credulity of any person unacquainted with the Indian country: and although some of his statements were slightly tinctured with the prevalent failing of La Guinne, there was a *vraisemblance* enough throughout to command our belief in their general accuracy. In a country, however, in which there is no legal tribunal to appeal to, and into which the 'King's writ does not run,' many acts must be committed that would not stand a strict investigation in Banco Regis. 'My legal primer,' said Ogden, 'says that necessity has no law: and in this place, where the custom of the country, or as lawyers say, the *Lex non scripta* is our only guide, we must, in our acts of summary legislation, sometimes perform the parts of judge, jury, sheriff, hangman, gallows, and all!'" And again: "Sunday, June 29. At half past eleven A.M. This day we bid adieu to the humorous, honest, eccentric, law-defying Peter Ogden, the terror of the Indians and the delight of all gay fellows." (Cox, *Adventures on the Columbia.*)

[1] A pleasant little estate near Forres, afterwards purchased by John Stuart and where he passed his declining years. He died in 1847, after losing his beloved only son.

Bay Company or in some other capacity. Desiring his uncle's advice, he intended almost immediately setting out from Forres.

It was on the 14th of April, 1838, that Donald Alexander Smith bade farewell to his parents, his sisters and boyhood's friends in Forres. He did not again see his native town for more than a quarter of a century.

Howbeit, that "noblest prospect a Scotchman ever sees — the highroad to London" — was not for him. His trunk went forward by carrier and on foot he set out to Aberdeen, embarking in a coasting schooner thence to the English capital. Apropos of this spring-time trudge to Aberdeen an anecdote may be narrated here.

One morning, in the early years of the present century, an elderly individual, not very prepossessing as to appearance, called at the office of the High Commissioner for Canada in London and asked to see Lord Strathcona. He was told that his lordship was far too busy to see any but those who had appointments with him.

"Well," was the confident reply, "he'll see me if you tell him that my father drove him to Aberdeen when he sailed for Canada."

The message was taken in to Lord Strathcona the result being to gain immediate admittance for the visitor. Five minutes later, he emerged with a five-pound note crackling in his palm.

Three weeks later the same man reappeared. Again he was told how busy the High Commissioner was, five or six persons then occupying the

waiting-room. His answer was the same: "Tell him my father drove him to Aberdeen when he sailed for Canada." The result was a summons to enter. After a brief interval once more he emerged rustling another five-pound note.

A few weeks later, he presented himself a third time. The secretary felt that the limits of benevolence must surely have been reached.

"Here is this broken-down Aberdonian, my lord, come to see you again — the man who says his father drove you to Aberdeen when you went to Canada. He has had two five-pound notes from your lordship already."

"Indeed!" said Lord Strathcona, in his quiet way. "I cannot possibly see him today. Give him another five-pound note and tell him he need not come again. You may add that his father did not drive me to Aberdeen when I went to Canada. As a matter of fact, *I walked.*"

Donald Smith to Mrs. Alexander Smith

London, April 30th, 1838.

My dear Mother, — I arrived in London early yesterday morning in the best of health and none the worse for my journey. I thought it would be prudent not to call upon Uncle at his lodgings in Clerkenwell until after ten o'clock, so that I had plenty of time to deliver Mrs. Grant's parcel to be called for at the coach office in Ludgate Hill. Uncle Stuart received me cordially and is looking well. He was obliged to fulfil an important business engagement, but I accompanied him in a stage as far as Hanover Square, and I afterwards

dined with him and Mr. James Murdoch in Clerkenwell. He quite approved my plans for leaving at once for Canada in case he is unable to arrange for a clerkship here, in which case I should sail in the *Camden*. I am to go and see Mr. Smith [1] in Fenchurch Street to-morrow. Mr. Stuart strongly advises my not accepting anything but from Governor Simpson himself; who could effect much more favourable arrangements if he were to be disposed to do so. Openings in the Indian Country are much more difficult and less profitable than formerly. The prospects of a great decrease in the price of beaver is everywhere spoken of. My uncle assured me that if he had to begin his career afresh, he would have nothing to do with the Honourable Company or with the Indian country, but would settle in Upper Canada, where land is cheap and quite large towns are springing up in all parts.

Unfortunately, both Upper and Lower Canada are now deeply involved in political difficulties and trade and commerce may be at a standstill when I arrive. But my uncle confides that if Governor S. can do nothing in the Bay or in the North-West, there are in contemplation new posts in the East for which I may be found suitable. Should this fail, Mr. Stuart's old friend in Boucherville will instruct me best how to proceed. Governor Simpson is, he says, surrounded by many satellites who naturally desire to advance their own relatives.

London is a very gay place at this season of the year. I have already visited the West End of town, walking all the way from the Mansion House, where the Lord Mayor resides, to Hyde Park, where the aristocracy

[1] William Gregory Smith, secretary of the Hudson's Bay Company.

are to be seen riding and driving. You have heard of Rotten Row: it is a fine place. Here the trees and flowers are a good month in advance of ours in Scotland or at least in Forres. Had I been in the Park an hour later or earlier, I should have been rewarded by the spectacle of Her Majesty. The Queen and the Duchess of Kent, her mother, drive every day, I am told; so I shall hope to enjoy the privilege.

To-morrow, after my return from Fenchurch Street, I am accompanying my uncle to Ealing. I do not know yet whether I shall meet my cousin, Donald Stuart, or not. I will write you fully before I sail. Give my love to Margaret and to Marianne. Also to Jane when you write.

I am, my dear mother,

Your affectionate son,

DONALD SMITH.

To "be rewarded by the spectacle of Her Majesty" would probably evoke derision nowadays amongst clerks of eighteen; but both the aspiration and the expression were then, and ever, characteristic of Donald Smith. He had his ideals in thought, action, and deportment and was, like most Highlanders of his class, extremely conservative, and reverent of constituted authority. Although the great-grandson of a Jacobite who had been out in the '45, he fully shared his uncle's loyalty to the sovereign, and neither then nor afterwards had any sympathy for radicals, republicans, or rebels. The action of Papineau, Mackenzie, and the rest who had just then been plunging Upper and Lower Canada into confusion and bloodshed excited his

resentment. With these events overseas he neglected no means of acquainting himself.

He recalled long afterwards:—

> As I was going out to Canada, I made it my business to inform myself as thoroughly as I could of the political situation there. I read every newspaper and pamphlet I could come at, and afterwards went to the *Morning Herald* office and looked up the Canadian articles and the debates in Parliament of Canadian affairs.

But this sojourn in London was brief—so brief indeed that he was not even "rewarded by the spectacle of Her Majesty," although his magnificent uncle took him to hear a debate in the gallery of the House of Commons, where he saw Lords Melbourne and Brougham, and a number of youthful legislators who were afterwards to fill all Europe with their renown. He noted particularly the Reporters' Gallery and remembered that he had once cherished thoughts in that direction. Fifteen months before, his eye would have lighted on the eager, boyish figure of Charles Dickens, whom he was afterwards to see and hear, amongst the occupants of that same gallery. The famous novelist's father, John Dickens, and his father-in-law, George Hogarth, were still there. The visitors tried to get into the House of Lords, but for some reason failed. The time for this adventure was not yet. Sixty years later this young Scottish emigrant was to enter the gilded chamber in the robes and wearing the coronet of a peer. Such reflections are trite only so far as all repeated magic is trite. We may multiply

romances and sunsets; but the wonder remains eternal.

It was high time to depart to the chosen land of his destiny and Donald writes thus to his mother:

Donald Smith to Mrs. Alexander Smith, Forres

London, May 9th, 1838.

My dear Mother, — All is now arranged and I am to sail for Quebec in the *Royal William* at short notice, perhaps to-night or to-morrow morning, according to tide and cargo. You will therefore not hear from me again until my next letter reaches you from Canada, supposing that I am spared by Providence.

It is still doubtful whether I shall enter the service of the Hudson's Bay Company in any capacity. At present my own view favours Upper Canada. I have letters to Governor Simpson, Mr. Stewart, and Mr. Lewis Grant. My uncle strongly advises me, on arrival at Montreal, to push on westward. Canada is at present in a most troubled state and trade is in consequence suffering. Lord Durham sailed for Quebec in the *Hastings* a fortnight ago with royal powers to effect a settlement of the troubles and administer punishment to the rebels.

I shall hardly arrive before the middle of June, but this will depend upon the weather, especially in the Gulf and River of St. Lawrence where fogs and ice prevail until very late in the spring.

My love to you and to all. Rest assured I shall write fully. My uncle leaves next week for the North.

I remain, my dear mother,

Your affectionate son,

Donald.

Introduced by his Uncle

In his pocket Donald Smith carried at least three letters of introduction written by his uncle.

That to the fur-trade autocrat, the "Emperor of the Plains," the redoubtable Governor Simpson, will be read with interest:—

John Stuart to George Simpson

LONDON, May 8th, 1838.

MY DEAR SIR, — The bearer of this, my nephew, Mr. D. A. Smith, entertains at present thoughts of following in the footsteps of his uncle and many of our old friends in the fur-trade and for this reason desires the honour of an interview with you, which perhaps for my sake you will grant. He is of good character, studious, painstaking, and enterprising. He has recently been devoting his attention to the law, but has decided to leave this for a more active life. If you know of any way in which he may be of service to the Hudson's Bay Company, the exercise of your interest will only add one more obligation to the debt at present borne by,

My dear Sir,
Yours ever most sincerely and respectfully,
JOHN STUART.

The other letters were to Mr. Edward Ellice and Mr. Alexander Stewart. We must not take present leave of the old fur-trader without presenting in full his letter to the last-named kinsman, partly for its intrinsic interest, but more especially because of its direct reference to the subject of this work who was going out to Canada *à l'aventure*.

John Stuart to Alexander Stewart

London, 10th May, 1838.

My dear, respected old Friend, — It is now a long time since I have had the pleasure of receiving a letter from you, only but once since my return to this country. Still, I had the happiness of being informed by Governor Simpson, that you continue in the enjoyment of that, the greatest of earthly blessings, health; and next to the pleasure of hearing from yourself personally, nothing could afford me equal satisfaction. I have written you frequently, but as I did not like to trouble the Hudson's Bay Company with the carriage and sent the letters by vessels sailing direct to Quebec, which I am told is not the most sure conveyance, it is possible you did not secure them and I shall in future be more careful and send them either in the Hudson's Bay packet or by post.

My health, thank God, is wonderfully good considering my age, and the change of climate and of living. I scarcely was ever better in my life and most earnestly do hope and pray that you may long continue to enjoy the same blessing. You are the oldest and most valued of my North-West friends; how can I ever forget the happiness I enjoyed in your company? Our minds ever congenial, nor do I know that we ever differed seriously even in opinion. From this circumstance alone is now derived more than half my present happiness, and I think I enjoy more than a common share for an Indian trader. If I am not a guest at Fenchurch Street, I have friends of my own both here and in every part of the Kingdom who are equally respectable and who are always pleased to see me.

I do not know what you will think of my retirement, but of all that I asked nothing was refused. Whether I could obtain better terms is immaterial. I did not ask it and my resignation is accepted for 1st June, 1839. Though retaining my two full two eighty-fifths for that outfit and my retired one eighty-fifth for the succeeding six years 1840, '41, '42, '43, '44 and 1845. If these are better terms than commonly granted, I in a great measure owe it to Governor Simpson. I have heard that you have met with a great loss through the mismanagement, or something worse, of Felix La Rocque, but I have not heard the particulars and hope it is not material. I hope you will write me particulars regarding your affairs, and if there is any in which I can be of use to you, I hope you will command me as a brother.

My nephew, Mr. D. A. Smith, the bearer of this, has this moment (9 P.M.) a summons to be on board by 10 P.M. which compels me to cut short. You will probably see my nephew and will not like him the worse for being the son of my sister. He is, I believe, a fine lad, acknowledged by all to be of an excellent character. He goes *à l'aventure;* and if it is possible that through your friends you could procure any situation for him better than that of entering the service of the Hudson's Bay Company, I know that for my sake you will do it.

Remember me kindly to every individual comprising your family and with every kind wish for you all, believe me unalterably,

My dear respected old friend,
Yours ever most sincerely,
JOHN STUART.

There was a delay of some days and it was after midnight on the 16th before the *Royal William* swung down the Thames on her voyage to Quebec. By this time Donald had almost abandoned the notion of entering the service of the Hudson's Bay Company on his arrival in the New World. His thoughts were wrapped up in Upper Canada and the vast and wonderful opportunities which were set forth in the prospectus of the Canada Company and the pages of the two *Emigrants' Guides* whose pages he continued to pore over even in the throes of sea-sickness.

There were only two other cabin passengers on the ship, and luckily from one of these, a Mr. Ross, who had formerly taken up land in Upper Canada and was familiar with the country and the conditions of life there, he obtained a great deal of additional information of a character not set down in the books. Mr. Ross had disposed of his land and had embarked in the lumber business in Quebec, for which industry he predicted a great future. The one black cloud he saw on the horizon was the danger of Parliament's repealing the Navigation Laws, which would enable Great Britain to procure her supply of timber from the Baltic ports without payment of duty, which in his opinion would deal a deadly blow both at the British trade in timber and also at colonial shipping. At present ships were able to make a profit even if the outward voyage were under ballast, as was the case with the *Royal William*. Mr. Smith learnt a great deal of the character and sufferings of the immigrants from Upper

Canada, who were pouring by shiploads into a country whose cultivated parts, strange as it may seem, were already congested with labour.

Addressing an Oxford audience at the close of the century, Lord Strathcona recalled the Canada of his youth: —

My first voyage [he said] took between forty and fifty days, and the clipper ship in which I sailed, of about five hundred tons or thereabouts, was a considerable vessel in those days — the largest boat of the kind known at that time being about one thousand tons. A few weeks ago I crossed the Atlantic, spent a week in Canada, and was back again in London in three weeks from the day I started!

In 1838 there was no Dominion of Canada. British North America consisted of what are now the Provinces of Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario, and Newfoundland. The country west of Ontario, now the Provinces of Manitoba, the North-West Territories, and British Columbia, and the territory adjoining Hudson's Bay, was under the control of the great Company of that name, which received its charter in 1670. The only inhabitants of this western country were the officers of the Company, the trappers, and the Indians. All the Provinces were separate and distinct, and they had treated each other as independent communities. The population of British North America numbered about 1,200,000.

No one travelling through Ontario and the other Provinces to-day could imagine the state of things that existed sixty years ago. It seems almost incredible. Everything is made so easy for emigrants now — the travelling is comfortable, the voyage is short, the food

is much better than many of them get at home, and free grants of prairie land can be obtained unencumbered with trees and quite ready for the plough.

In 1838 the only incorporated city in Canada was Toronto, which at that time had a population of from 13,000 to 14,000 people. In Lower Canada, Quebec at that time was a more important town in many ways than Montreal. It was at the head of navigation, as the shallows in Lake St. Peter, on the St. Lawrence, had not then been dredged, and it was the *entrepôt* of a greater share of the St. Lawrence trade than it is now. A few ocean vessels of light draught went up to Montreal, but much of the merchandise for that city was trans-shipped at Quebec into other vessels.

He went on to say:—

The social condition of the people was naturally not of a high standard. Their work was hard, their mode of living simple, their houses largely log huts; and they had to go long distances to sell their produce and to buy new supplies. This, of course, refers largely to the country districts, or "backwoods" as they were called in those days. In the towns and villages there was plenty of intercourse; and, judging from my own early experiences, life in the centres of population was pleasant and attractive, and the Canadians were as generous in their hospitality as they are known to be to-day.

Lord Strathcona's great services in the peopling of the Canadian Dominion at a later day warrant us in pausing for a moment further to glance at the economic conditions prevalent on his arrival in 1838.

Infamous Immigration Conditions

With the close of the Napoleonic wars a ceaseless stream of immigrants from the British Isles began pouring into Canada. It was obviously in the interests of the great private landowners, the majority of whom were absentees, and the great land companies, such as the Canada Company and the British American Land Company, as well as the Government of the country, to induce as many British families and labourers as possible to establish homesteads in Upper Canada, the eastern townships of Quebec and in Prince Edward Island. It deserves to be remembered that in the decade and a half between 1815 and 1830, no fewer than 168,615 immigrants arrived at the port of Quebec. Lord Durham, in his famous *Report* of 1839, states that in the previous nine years 263,089 immigrants had landed at Quebec, adding that, if certain facts had been known, this inrush of the poorer classes would have ceased. The true story of that period of Canadian immigration has yet to be told. It is incontestable that the bulk of these immigrants were herded in foul ships, making the voyage to Canada under distressing and infamous conditions. Dr. John Skey, Deputy Inspector-General of Hospitals, and President of the Quebec Emigrants' Society, testified that the emigrants with families from the south of Ireland in particular, as well as the pauper emigrants sent by parishes from England, arrived in large proportions in a state of abject poverty, although the voluntary emigrants from England had a little money.

Another local authority testified that

the poorer classes of Irish and the English paupers sent by parishes were, on arrival of vessels, in many instances, entirely without provisions, so much so that it was necessary immediately to supply them with food from shore; some of these ships had already received food and water from other vessels with which they had fallen in. . . . This destitution or shortness of provisions, combined with dirt and bad ventilation, had invariably produced fevers of a contagious character, and occasioned some deaths on the passage, and from such vessels numbers, varying from twenty to ninety each vessel, had been admitted to hospital with contagious fevers immediately upon arrival. For lack of proper food, the immigrants fall into a state of debility and low spirits by which they are incapacitated from the exertions required for cleanliness and exercise and also indisposed to solid food, more particularly the women and children; and on their arrival here I find many cases of typhus fever among them.

It was said that the condition of many of the ships was so abominable that the pestiferous odours could easily be distinguished (in a favourable wind or in a dead calm) when an emigrant ship arrived.

I have known as many as from thirty to forty deaths to have taken place in the course of a voyage from typhus fever on board of a ship containing from five to six hundred passengers; and within six weeks after the arrival of some vessels and the landing of the passengers at Quebec, the hospital has received upwards of one hundred patients at different times from among them.[1]

[1] *Imperial Blue Books on affairs relating to Canada.* Appendix to Lord Durham's *Report.*

Children of sick or dead parents were left without protection and wholly dependent on the casual charity of the inhabitants.

Even those immigrants who had escaped sickness, having sailed with but little money, were often destitute on landing. The extortions of the ship captains on the passage had robbed them of their last shillings.

The captain usually told the emigrants that they need not lay in provisions for more than three weeks or a month, well knowing that the average passage was six weeks, and often eight or nine weeks. Laying by his own stock of provisions, the captain, after the emigrants' supplies had run out, obliged them to pay as much as four hundred per cent on the cost price for food, and of nauseating quality at that.

Of these particular immigrants, Dr. Morrin reported that they were generally forcibly landed by the masters of vessels, and without a shilling in their pockets to get a night's lodging.

They commonly established themselves along the wharves and at the different landing-places crowding into any place of shelter they could obtain, where they subsisted principally upon the charity of the inhabitants.

For six weeks at a time, [stated the last-named witness,] from the commencement of the emigrant ship season, I have known the shores of the river along Quebec, for about a mile and a half, crowded with these unfortunate people, the places of those who might have moved off constantly supplied by fresh arrivals

and there being daily drafts of from ten to thirty taken to the hospital with infectious disease. The consequence was its spread among the inhabitants of the city, especially in the districts in which these unfortunate creatures had established themselves. Those who were not absolutely without money got into low taverns and boarding-houses and cellars, where they congregated in immense numbers and where their state was not any better than it had been on shipboard. This state of things existed within my knowledge from 1826 to 1832 and probably for some years previously.

Sir James Kempt reported of one particular shipload of immigrants, arriving at Quebec in 1830, that those immigrants were described in a letter from the magistrates of a parish in England as industrious people who had been trained to some branch of woollen manufacture, but who would "cheerfully accept any employment that might be offered." Kempt remonstrated in the strongest terms on the cruelty of attempting to relieve the English and Irish parishes by sending such hordes of paupers to a distant colony where they arrived destitute among strangers.

Few of these people had agricultural knowledge. Numbers who took to the bush found that they could not make a living and thronged the cities. In Lord Durham's *Report* it was stated that many resorted to the larger towns in the Provinces, with their starving families, to eke out, by day labour and begging, a wretched existence, while such others as could go, tempted by a more genial climate and higher wages, went to the United States. Many,

forced by stern necessity, remained in Canada. The Toronto *Mirror*, in an editorial of May 20, 1842, and in numerous other articles, complained that Toronto was crowded with labourers and mechanics who had completed the railroads and canals in Great Britain, and that large numbers of these impoverished workers were seeking employment.

A decade later famine in Europe was to drive greater numbers of emigrants, many of whom were agriculturalists, to Canada and the United States; and of these great numbers perished during the passage. The *Report* of the Commissioners of Immigration for the year 1847 showed that in that year of famine and disease, 17,445 British subjects died on the voyage to Canada and New Brunswick, in quarantine or in the hospitals. This mortality did not include those perishing from contagion disseminated in the principal Canadian cities and settlements.

Nevertheless, there was a vast and continuing influx of workers which, added to the proletariat already in Canada, formed a dependent body of surplus labour required in lumbering, building roads, canals, and railroads, and in agricultural pursuits.

Such, briefly, was one aspect of the Canadian scene, long forgotten or overlooked by our complacent historians, in the first year of the Victorian era.

It was into this Canada, the receptacle of hordes of dispirited immigrants, where, besides, amongst the old colonists "two races warred in the bosom of a single state," that Donald Alexander Smith was to be received.

As to the political conditions, which had caused the despatch of Lord Durham by the British government of the day, are they not known to even the most elementary student of Canadian history?

After a long and dreary voyage, meeting with much fog and many icebergs, the ship entered the Gulf in the latter half of June. On the 27th she anchored for a day at Fraserville (Rivière du Loup), where the captain went ashore, taking Mr. Smith with him. The seigneur, Mr. Malcolm Fraser, was a grandson of one of Wolfe's captains. He received the young Highlander cordially, telling him that it was a good omen that he should first have stepped foot in Canada upon the domain of a Highland Fraser. Donald observed that Fraser's English was extremely faulty, both he and his family commonly using the French tongue, but he had enough Gaelic for a fervent *Slainté*, in toasting his guests.[1]

On June 30 they reached Quebec, the morning sun shedding a glory over the citadel, ramparts, and spires of the famous fortress city of the New World. Four short weeks before Lord Durham, the new Governor and pacificator of British North America, had landed with his suite. Two days before — the day of the youthful Queen's coronation — he had issued that "historic Proclamation and Ordinance which was to terminate the rebellion, at the expense of his own career and happiness." And on that very day (June 30th) from the citadel, a few yards away from where the young

[1] It was at Rivière du Loup that old John McLoughlin, the doughty Pacific fur-trading pioneer, was born.

Scot stood gazing at the walls, Durham was writing the Prime Minister, Lord Melbourne: —

"You will not believe it, perhaps, but it is a fact that all here are charmed at being relieved from self-government and being for the time under a pure despotism. That is all very well for the moment, but cannot last."

Donald was deeply impressed by Quebec and would well have liked to pass several days there, especially as his new friend, Mr. Ross, procured him an introduction to the influential Mr. William Price,[1] who, he opined, might advance his fortune. But he resolved to hasten on to Montreal. He dined, however, with his friends at the newly opened Victoria Hotel, where amongst the commercial folk and lumber merchants assembled he found the reigning topic was Lord Durham's "far-reaching, though not a universal amnesty." Wolfred Nelson and seven other political prisoners were to be sent to Bermuda, while Papineau and his fellow fugitives were forbidden to return to Canada under pain of death.

He encloses in a letter to his mother a music-master's advertisement with the comment: "You will gather from Signor Mazocchi's advertisement that besides the military bands and the Highland pipers Quebec is a centre of musical culture." [2]

[1] Mr. Price came to Canada in 1810 and established in course of time extensive lumber mills at Tadousac and Chicoutimi and other points on the Saguenay River. He became famous as "Le Père du Saguenay" and the founder of a family still of commercial power in that part of the country.

[2] "Signor Vincent Mazocchi, Professor of Music from Italy, has

In the boat on the way to Montreal they passed the steamer *Canada*. On board this ship, the sight of which occasioned no small excitement, were the convicted rebels, Wolfred Nelson, Robert Milnes, Bouchette, Viger, Marchessault, Gauvin, Goddu, Des Rivières, and Luc Masson, guarded by a detachment of the 71st Regiment. These men, on reaching Quebec, were transferred immediately to H.M.S. *Vestal* under sailing orders for Bermuda. Three weeks before, the Upper Canada rebels had been similarly deported. Durham's action was generally approved in Canada. He had exceeded his authority in the confident expectation that the ministry at home would support him. They disavowed him as we all know: he returned to England and died two years later a broken-hearted man.

On the 2d of July, Donald Alexander Smith arrived in the city which was afterwards to be eternally associated with his activities and munificence, and beheld for the first time the steep and rugged eminence from which this unknown Scottish lad was destined one day to borrow a part of his title in the British peerage.

Montreal at this time was about equal to Quebec in size, but superior in commercial importance.

the Honour to inform the Nobility and Gentry of Quebec and its vicinity that being desirous of opening an Academy of Music, both vocal and instrumental, he has just made the necessary arrangements in the house in Palace Street, opposite to Mr. Balzaretti's, where musical amateurs will find a prospectus of his Conditions. He flatters himself that his long acquired experience and his unremitted attention may entitle him to a share of the valuable patronage of the Nobility and Gentry of Quebec."

Its greatness [wrote a visitor in 1838] is likely to increase from its favourable situation and the growth of Upper Canada, of which, as being the highest point of the St. Lawrence to which larger vessels can ascend, it always will be the emporium.

Another visitor, Nathaniel Parker Willis, thus expressed himself:—

Although the island possesses in general that level surface that fits it for a thorough cultivation, yet about a mile and a half northeast rises a hill, 550 feet high, commanding a noble view over a fertile country, which is watered by the several branches and tributaries of the St. Lawrence. Its face is covered with agreeable villas and its wooded heights form a frequent resort for pleasure parties of the city. But the intention now understood to be entertained of erecting fortifications on its summit will, if put into execution, banish in a great measure, its rural character.[1]

The city built on the southern border of this fine island was, we are told, not crowded, like Quebec, into a limited space which could alone be covered with streets and habitations. It had a wide, level surface to extend over, so that even the older streets were of tolerable breadth and several of them occupied its entire breadth. The principal one, Rue Notre Dame, considerably exceeded half a mile in extent and contained many of the chief public buildings.

There is an Upper and Lower Town, though the difference of elevation is very slight, but the former is

[1] N. P. Willis, *Canadian Scenery.*

much the more handsome. The seven suburbs are not, as in the older capital, detached and extraneous, but on the same level and immediately adjacent. Their streets continued in the direction of those in the body of the place are regular and display many handsome houses. The vicinity is adorned by many beautiful villas.

Of the public buildings of Montreal, the new Roman Catholic Cathedral of Notre Dame, completed in 1829, is undoubtedly the most splendid . . . superior in fact to any other in British North America.

The English establishments for religion and education are also very respectable. The Episcopal Church is a very handsome specimen; the Scotch Church is plain, but attended by a highly respectable congregation.

In 1814 an important donation had been made by a wealthy citizen, the Honourable James McGill, to found a college for the principal branches of education. The endowments consisted of a valuable estate on the Mountain, with £10,000 in money. It had not, however, yet come into operation, in consequence of a lawsuit which had dragged along until 1835, when the available funds in the hands of the institution amounted to £22,000. A prospectus announced of this college: "It is to be conducted on the most liberal system, individuals of every religious persuasion being admitted as students and even as teachers."

The harbour of Montreal had not then received the attention its importance merited. It had no wharfage, though close to the bank and in front of the town was a depth of fifteen feet, sufficient for the

largest vessels which ascend to this point. Its chief disadvantage consisted of two shoals and of the rapids of St. Mary's about a mile below, which vessels often found it difficult to stem. Important improvements were contemplated and a grant for the purpose was voted by the Legislature. The communication with the opposite side of the river was carried on by means of ten ferries, on several of which plied a number of steam vessels. A wooden bridge was once constructed from Repentigny on the northern shore, but in the spring after its completion it was carried down by the masses of ice. Sanguine spirits thought that one of larger span might be constructed free from that danger.

Before evening Donald Smith had left a letter of introduction from his uncle to Mr. Edward Ellice at that gentleman's Montreal residence. As Ellice was absent, he had walked out to Lachine, where he found Mr. Lewis Grant, a native of Forres and a connection of his mother's. Grant was unable to suggest any favourable opening for the new arrival. He recommended him, however, to lose no time in consulting with Mr. Alexander Stewart, who was a man of no little consequence at Boucherville, another suburb of the city. By this gentleman, whose appearance and manners strikingly recalled his uncle, Donald was confirmed in all his fears concerning the prospects of success in Upper Canada. He remained in Boucherville for a couple of days considering the situation. His host and his friends having all avowed their complete inability to "procure any situation better than that of entering the

service of the Hudson's Bay Company," Donald Smith resolved to take the now apparently inevitable plunge. One July morning, therefore, he duly presented himself and his letter of introduction to Governor Simpson at the latter's official quarters at the Montreal suburb of Lachine.[1]

[1] Lachine is about eight miles above Montreal, where the navigation is interrupted by the Fall of St. Louis, to obviate which a fine canal bearing its name not long before had been erected at an expense of £137,000. This village, which originally received its appellation from the chimerical idea that it would afford a route to China, formed in 1838 an important point in the navigation, both of the St. Lawrence and the Ottawa, near the junction of which rivers it is situated.

CHAPTER III

ENLISTMENT IN THE COMPANY

1838–1848

GEORGE SIMPSON, the "King of the Fur-Trade" and the "Emperor of the Plains" (to quote but a pair of the titles he demurely admitted in the circle of his flatterers), merits a somewhat more prominent place in Canadian history than Canadian historians commonly accord him.

For forty years Simpson (not yet Sir George) was easily the one outstanding figure in a territory larger than Europe, whose simple word was law amongst a legion of brave and hardy white traders and hunters and amongst twenty tribes of savages from the Esquimaux of Ungava, the Crees of Assiniboine, and the Chinooks of New Caledonia. He was born in 1796 in Loch Broom, Ross Shire, Scotland. From 1809 to 1820, he was employed as a clerk in the West India trade. Lord Selkirk, hearing of his ability, appointed him, just before the coalition of the two rival fur-trading companies, Superintendent of the Hudson's Bay Company's affairs, and after one year of successful service, he was chosen Governor of Rupert's Land.[1]

[1] This was the official designation. There was a Governor of Assiniboia, Red River Settlement, which office, however, was ostensibly confined to the administration of government — such as it was — in the Settlement, but had nothing to do with the trade proper. This designation of attribute and duty, however, does not apply in all strictness to the earlier Governors of Assiniboia, who were generally, if not invariably so for a time, Chief Factors in the

Simpson had been set on this pinnacle of power without having given any proofs of special fitness and knowing less about the fur-trade than many a raw youth who had served the first week of his indenture at a third-rate outpost in the Indian country. To those who can picture what the fur-trade was in the days of the old régime, the stern and rugged characters it evolved, the scenes of violence and bloodshed it witnessed; who recall the giant forms of Alexander Mackenzie, William MacGillivray, John George McTavish, John McLaughlin, and the rest; to such as have read the epic of *Astoria*, there is something ludicrous in the despatch of the youthful Simpson to quell a storm which had been raging for two decades and to allay the fierce passions of men who knew no law save their own strength and cunning. Yet Simpson, one of those men "whom the blind goddess delighteth to honour," did not fail, but succeeded in the task. It happens sometimes that a small pin of sound metal, artfully introduced, becomes a pivot around which an unwieldy engine, otherwise threatened by dislocation and disintegration, performs its functions.

But one must do justice to Simpson. He had val-

service of the Company. The supreme Governor was he of the London Board; but for the regulation of the trade, and the working of its machinery, a Governor was appointed by the Governor and Committee of Directors in London, for their territories, who with a Council of Commissioned Officers, meeting at a central point, such as Norway House, at the head of Lake Winnipeg, were the only constituted body for conducting the business in the territory. It was only as the head of this body, and with certain special power *in eundo*, that Mr. Simpson (afterwards Sir George) was at this time Governor-in-Chief.

uable qualities of his own. In the language of a contemporary trader who had many opportunities of knowing him well, he "combined with the prepossessing manners of a gentleman all the craft and subtlety of an intriguing courtier; while his cold and callous heart was incapable of sympathizing with the woes and pains of his fellow-men. On his first arrival he carefully concealed from those whom he was about to supersede the powers with which he was invested; he studied the characters of individuals, scrutinized in secret their mode of managing affairs, and when he had made himself fully acquainted with every particular he desired to know, he produced his commission; — a circumstance that proved as unexpected as it was unsatisfactory to those whose interests it affected." [1]

The jealousies and resentments engendered by the long strife made his position at first difficult. He lavished "bows and smiles and honied words" alternately upon the North-Westers and the gentlemen of the Hudson's Bay Company, each in turn thinking him their partisan.

Having thus completely gained the confidence of the North-West partners, his policy began gradually to unfold itself. One recalcitrant North-Wester was despatched with a compliment to the Columbia; another to the Montreal department; another to Rupert's River; until in the course of a few seasons following this happy precept, *divide et impera*, he had rid himself of all the annoyance and danger of opposition, and his rule, as was truly said,

[1] Chief Trader John McLean, 1849.

became more absolute than that of any Governor under the British Crown.

Amongst Mr. Simpson's gifts, natural or acquired, was the useful one of instilling awe into the breasts of junior clerks, and all applicants for office or promotion. He was of small, almost diminutive stature. Though naturally good-tempered, it came to be said of him that "he took delight in the outward show of tyranny." If he was pompous, it was by no means an empty and unprofitable pomposity. Thrust early into a position of great power over numerous subordinates, many of whom only saw him at long intervals in the flesh, he imagined it highly advantageous to cultivate the glance, speech, and bearing of no less a personage than the Emperor Napoleon.

Simpson's admiration for the mighty Corsican was unbounded. It was one of the passions of his life. To-day we have lived to see the Napoleonic cult become sufficiently vulgar; in this quarter of the globe Simpson was one of the pioneers. He collected every scrap of writing relating to his hero, and the walls of his successive dwellings at Fort Garry, Norway House, and Lachine were adorned with Napoleonic prints. He did more: he infected many of the old factors and traders with his passion. No one writing of the Company officers of the period of the Simpson régime could give an adequate notion of their lives and characters without mentioning the hold which the story of Bonaparte and his battles had upon their imaginations. A Chief Trader wrote in 1834 from Isle à la Crosse:

"For God's sake, send me Scott's next volume the moment you can. I want to see how he deals with Ney. . . . Can't you see Nap retreating from Churchill to Cumberland House?"

Such fancies, it must be admitted, threw an agreeable glamour over the steppes of Athabasca.[1]

I have permitted myself this excursus upon Simpson because of the influence the great little man had upon the fortunes of Donald Alexander Smith.

From the fact of his having the recommendation of Mr. Ellice, whose father was one of the directors, Donald Smith was in a somewhat more favourable position for employment in the Company than other applicants in Canada. The custom was that these should receive their appointment by the London Board. Some twenty years afterwards Mr. Ellice, Senior ("Old Bear" Ellice), stated to a Parliamentary Committee:—

I took great care in former times to send out the best men we could find, principally from the north of Scotland, sons of country gentlemen and of farmers who had been educated in the schools and colleges of Scotland. They went out first as apprentices, then were made clerks, and then became gradually advanced to the higher positions in the service; some of these men have lived to become great benefactors to the country. . . . Governor Simpson has taken very great interest in the matter for many years, but I think that lately it has

[1] An ingenious paraphrase of Bishop Whately's *Historic Doubts*, relative to Napoleon, was circulated about 1830 by a young clerk, Mr. Sieveright. It is entitled *Historic Doubts relating to George Simpson and Historic Certainties respecting the Fur-Trade of the Northern Department.*

been too much the habit to endeavour to supply the places of men who have retired by persons connected with the country, some of them half-breeds; and I doubt very much, when we look at the future security of the country, whether that will be found to be good policy.

Whether it was good policy for the London Board or not is an open question; but many of the native-born so appointed became the best-known, the best-liked, and most competent officers amongst the commissioned gentlemen of the fur-trade. Ellice went on to explain that the conduct of the young men in its service came "perpetually under the view first of the North-West Council and the Governor and then under the view of the Government at home; and it is so much for the interest of all parties to have good, zealous, active men, in the management of affairs at such a distance from all human society, that that is the best security for good selections." He laid stress upon the qualifications of "moral conduct and good sense" as quite indispensable, and pointed out, moreover, that it "is very essential to have men who can obtain influence over the Indians; if it is found that any man at a particular post gets indolent, inattentive, or has too intimate relations with particular Indians, or if his habits are supposed in any way to interfere with his good administration of the post, he is instantly changed."

Briefly, then, the surveillance of the Company over the youths entering its service was very exact,

the qualifications demanded were high, and the conditions stringent.

A decade later, a Chief Factor of the Company could pen these words: —

> The history of my career may serve as a warning to those who may be disposed to enter the Hudson's Bay Company's service. They may learn that from the moment they embark in the Company's canoes at Lachine, or in their ships at Gravesend, they bid adieu to all that civilized man most values on earth. They bid adieu to their family and friends, probably for ever; for if they should remain long enough to obtain the promotion that allows them the privilege of revisiting their native land — a period of from twenty to twenty-five years — what changes does not this life exhibit in a much shorter time? They bid adieu to all the comforts and conveniences of civilized life, to vegetate at some desolate, solitary post, hundreds of miles, perhaps, from any other human habitation save the wigwam of the savage; without any other society than that of their own thoughts, or of the two or three humble individuals who share their exile. They bid adieu to all the refinements and cultivation of civilized life, not infrequently becoming semi-barbarous — so altered in habits and sentiments that they not only become attached to savage life, but eventually lose all relish for any other.[1]

In less than a quarter of an hour Donald Smith's fate was decided. For the upshot of this interview, in which the youthful applicant was duly made to

[1] John McLean, *Twenty-five Years' Service in the Hudson's Bay Company.*

feel his own insignificance and the other's greatness and condescension, was that Donald was appointed forthwith an apprentice-clerk in the Company's service at Lachine at the munificent salary of £20 per annum, "and all found," as he used to recall grimly in his old age.

"You will begin at once, sir," concluded the Governor, "to familiarize yourself with your future duties. Call Mr. Mactavish."

A clerk of this name was summoned and entered the room bowing and scraping in the prescribed manner.

"Mr. Mactavish, have the goodness to take Mr. Donald Smith to the fur-room and instruct him in the art of counting rat-skins."

Whereupon, with a curt nod, Governor Simpson resumed the inspection of his correspondence. More than two generations later his official successor was wont to relate his experience on that first and many subsequent days in the Lachine fur-room; how, disdaining to wear gloves, the skin of his hands peeled off and became raw and painful from contact with the rough hides of the muskrats or musquashes;[1] how after being immured for days in solitude in the odoriferous chamber, counting thousands upon thousands of skins, a fellow-clerk visited him, and, bursting with laughter, summoned the others to enjoy the spectacle of the gloveless greenhorn. After that he wore the

[1] "Muskrat or musquash: a North American aquatic, arvicoline, rat-like rodent, yielding a valuable fur and secreting in its gland a substance with a musky smell." (Chambers.)

gloves prescribed. From rats, he proceeded to the peltries of beaver, marten, fox, mink, and otter, learning to distinguish the quality and value of the fur, the district from whence it came, and many other particulars which are essential to fur-trading lore.

Varying and succeeding this occupation were the examination, checking, and copying of the accounts prepared by the officers of the various posts in the entire Montreal Department, of the Southern Department, and even of other departments as well; for Simpson was a man of merciless method, unsparing of detail when it conduced to clarity and order, no matter what pains it cost his clerks or what time it involved. There was the listing of the stores and perpetual inventories, down to a paper of needles or a fraction of a pound of sugar. His aim was, as he himself boasted, to be able to ascertain in a moment exactly what was or should be, not only in the cash box and fur-room, but in the larder of every one of the one hundred and seventy posts of the Company from Ungava to Vancouver Island and from the Arctic Circle to Red River. He carried the practice of economy to great lengths, but, as was frequently alleged by his subordinates, not a little of his economy was of the "penny-wise, pound-foolish" order.

The clerks at Lachine all boarded and lodged at an establishment on the south side of the canal, kept by one Norton. Leave of absence, even on Sundays, was difficult if not impossible to obtain; for the Governor or his deputy, Chief Factor Keith,

exercised a watchful oversight of the staff, standing toward them in a quasi-paternal relation.

During the summer the Governor-General paid Lachine a visit with his suite. As the cavalcade drew nigh, all the clerks hastened to obtain a glimpse of the Earl, amongst them young Smith, who afterwards related that, "surprised by such splendor," he neglected to doff his cap, for which Mr. Keith rebuked him. "If," writes Durham's biographer, "Lord Durham could have foreseen Lord Strathcona's services to Canada, he would have clasped hands there and then with the sturdy young Scot."

At Lachine some forty to fifty canoes set forth annually with supplies of merchandise and ascended the Ottawa for about three hundred miles, when they were portaged across to French River and thus reached Lake Huron, where the *coureurs de bois* met them with their return cargoes of furs from the Indian country. All but one of the Company's buildings have vanished and Governor Simpson's house has long since given way to a convent.

Before that autumn was very far advanced, Lachine and the Hudson's Bay Company employees were plunged into a state of great excitement. No sooner had one rebellion been disposed of than another one burst into flame. What many shrewd observers had predicted now happened. Writing to his mother on the 8th of November, Donald relates:

The Canadians have once again risen in rebellion and on Sunday last martial law was proclaimed by Sir

John Colborne for the second time in one year. It began in Acadie County, where hundreds of loyalists were set upon and several murdered. In Laprairie the loyalists were granted a quarter of an hour to leave the village and the steamship *Princess Victoria* which was at the wharf was set afire by the rebels. At another place called Beauharnois a body of four hundred attacked a house where our Mr. Ellice and many other ladies and gentlemen were. They were summoned to surrender, which they did after half an hour's fighting. Mrs. Ellice, Mrs. Balfour, and other ladies who had taken refuge in the cellar were shamefully treated, and Mr. Ellice and his host, Mr. Brown, were carried off prisoners to Napierville. In Montreal there is great excitement and there are guards before the Montreal Bank and the principal buildings. The Company's storehouses are also guarded, and the clerks and labourers enrolled as constables. You remember my writing of Mr. Lewis Grant, son of Mr. Grant, of Forres, who has a business establishment at Lachine. He was on a visit to Mr. McDonald of Chateauguay, formerly one of the Company's men. Mr. McDonald's store, I hear, has been pillaged and both he and Mr. Grant taken prisoners and carried off.

Montreal is a scene of great martial enthusiasm and the people put every reliance in the troops who have been and are daily being despatched to the scene of the outbreak. Yesterday, the 71st Regiment, part of the 93d, and the Grenadier Guards departed by steamer, and some of us went down to see them off, their bands playing Highland airs. It is said General Colborne and General McDonell will leave in person to-day and this time it is certain the rebels will be shown no mercy. If it is not crushed soon, the civil and loyal population

will enlist *en masse* and you may expect to hear of my going as a soldier. I write this in haste to catch the last packet this season.

But although the rebellion was speedily crushed, and the Hudson's Bay Company's property not attacked, there continued plenty of excitement for several months. The state trial of the prisoners came off, and was a reigning topic. Donald's friend and relative, Grant, was called upon to give evidence.

On one occasion, at least, Donald mingled with some of the leading persons of Montreal. Mr. Ellice invited him to dinner out of friendship to his Uncle Stuart, and at the board he saw the celebrated Mr. Dease and another of the old explorers, Mr. Finlayson, besides the Mayor, Mr. Peter McGill.

Before the winter had really begun came a letter from his uncle.

John Stuart to Donald Smith

FORRES, October 2nd, 1838.

MY DEAR NEPHEW:—And so you have finally elected to take service with the old Company! I duly received your letter of 29th July from Lachine and I confess I was at first filled with surprise, because I had made up my mind that Upper Canada would claim you and that you would procure some situation with Mrs. Galt's interest.

However, I dare say you have, considering the deplorable conditions you describe, effected a prudent choice. The only, or at least the chief, drawback is that you are dependent upon the good-will and caprice of one man, who is a little too much addicted to pre-

judices for speedy advancement; but this is probably true in many other spheres of commercial endeavour. I wish it were in my power to assist you in his good graces; but as you know I am quitting the service and against his wish, which is by no means a present recommendation to his favour. There is, I may say, no man who is more appreciative of downright hard work coupled with intelligence, or one more intolerant of *puppyism*, by which I mean carelessness and presumption. Depend upon it, the Governor soon finds means of driving that sort of youth out of the service. In fact, I think he will stand idleness sooner than the least trace of presumption. It is his *foible* to exact not only strict obedience but deference to the point of humility. As long as you pay him in that coin you will quickly get on his sunny side and find yourself in a few years a trader at a congenial post, with promotion in sight.

You do not hint in your letter anything concerning your destination. Your sojourn at Lachine can hardly last beyond the coming winter, and instead of the West, you may be sent to one of the King's Posts or to the Ungava, if the Governor still has that bee in his bonnet.

I have, thank God, got through the summer tolerably and have spent one of the pleasantest years of my life — some reward for four decades of hard service. Life is all before you, keep a stout heart and lay in a good stock of that desirable commodity, patience, and all will be well. If you continue at Lachine, I may see you next spring. Give my regards to Mr. Stewart, Mr. Grant, and any of my old friends you happen to meet. Your mother and sisters continue well. With every kind wish I am, my dear Donald,

Your affectionate uncle,

JOHN STUART.

In the course of the ensuing two years Donald Smith was sent to the Lake of Two Mountains and to other adjacent posts, where he acquired that knowledge of French which was indispensable in the fur-trade and which stood him in such good stead at Red River thirty years afterwards.

On the south shore of the beautiful Lac des Chats stood Kinnel Lodge, the residence of a Highland chief, the Macnab, a pioneer of this portion of the Upper Ottawa. Of him Lord Strathcona was fond of telling the following story: —

On one occasion the Macnab entertained Sir George Simpson and a number of leading fur-traders of Highland origin. Amongst them was a Mackenzie, a Mactavish, a MacGillivray, a Macdonald and so on. Some surprise was expressed that Simpson should have occupied the seat at one end of the board and a Mr. Mackenzie the other end.

At last some one enquired, "Macnab, why are ye no at the heid o' your ain table?"

The host turned upon his questioner and answered with great dignity, —

"Mr. Macpherson, I 'd hae ye ken weel that where the Macnab sits there *is* the heid o' the table!"

Notwithstanding his uncle's influence, it cannot be said that Mr. Smith was ever a favourite of Governor Simpson. A legend used to be current in the service concerning the intercourse between the two men which would account for some of the dislike and asperity with which the High Priest occasionally visited the neophyte. Mr. Simpson had mar-

ried in 1828 an English lady of considerable attractions. Their married life, although happy on the whole, was not infrequently chequered by fits of jealousy alternately on the part of the husband and of the wife.

When Mr. Smith came to Lachine in 1838 [writes one of his fellow-apprentices], Mrs. Simpson, who always took a friendly interest in the "indentured young gentlemen," as they were called, was attracted by the simplicity and gentle address of the newcomer's manners. She invited him to tea; she occasionally commanded his escort on boating excursions. Once, after the Governor had returned after an absence at Red River, we heard that there had been a scene and that in consequence young Smith, although innocent of any offence but that of obliging a lady, was in disgrace, one gentleman averring that he had heard the Governor, in a highly pitched treble, declare that he was not going to endure any "quill-driving upstart apprentices dangling about a parlour reserved to the nobility and gentry." I am not sure that these last words were actually uttered by the Governor, but they represented at least the current opinion as to the purposes for which our autocrat reserved his parlour.

As to Donald Smith's personal appearance at the time of his arrival in Montreal, he was a little above middle height, with a fresh complexion, very light sandy hair, and grey-blue eyes. His features generally were cast in a large mould, and his general expression that of alertness and resolution combined with amiability. Afterwards, when he allowed a chin whisker to grow, its colour was a

bright chestnut. Altogether, in his uncle's words, he was, in outward person, a "fine lad."

One day the momentous tidings reached Lachine that Governor Simpson, then in London, had been created a Knight of the Bath for his "eminent services in the cause of discovery and exploration"; and on the heels of this it was rumoured that the "Emperor of the Plains" ("Penny plains and twopence coloured," wrote Thomas Hood on a delineation of the Emperor surrounded by his dusky subjects) contemplated making forthwith a journey round the world.[1]

It was at the end of March, 1841, that Sir George arrived at Lachine, with his retinue, which this time comprised two young English noblemen, Lord Caledon and Lord Mulgrave, who were bent on a sporting expedition to the Far West.

One morning Donald Smith, having superintended invoicing the last of the previous season's bales in the storeroom at Lachine, was informed that the Governor wished to see him. He entered Sir George's presence and a moment later had the pleasure of hearing him say: "You are appointed to Tadousac." The Governor paused, and then added, sharply, "It is now Monday; you will leave by the Quebec stage Wednesday morning."

With that he gave an abrupt nod and turned to

[1] Simpson's two octavo volumes chronicling this tour were by a former generation cynically and perhaps unjustly credited to Mr. (afterwards Judge) Adam Thom, assisted by E. M. Hopkins, the Governor's secretary and companion, a gentleman well known in Montreal and Donald Alexander Smith's immediate predecessor as the head of the Montreal office of the Company.

his secretary and a waiting pile of papers on his desk. Smith, thus dismissed, with a half-articulated "Good-day, sir," returned to the company of his fellow-clerks who were eagerly awaiting the result of the interview. They condoled with him: he was informed that promotion in the King's Posts District was slow; that he would probably remain at Tadousac and contiguous posts for many years; that the officer in charge there was a martinet; that the posts were badly provisioned; that furs were scarce; that competition abounded; that, in short, the only advantage of Gulf service lay in a supply of Gulf seals and of salmon. Worst of all, he was told that these King's Posts, of which Tadousac was the chief, were henceforward to be regarded as preliminary to Labrador and Ungava, where it was perpetual winter and where the hardships were such that no constitution but an Esquimaux's could endure it: and even they died off like plague-stricken sheep.[1]

"We rallied Mr. Smith a good deal on his appointment," wrote Edward Miles to his father. "His uncle having been the great Chief Factor Stuart, he thought he would have been sent to the neighbourhood of the Columbia."

Shortly before Mr. Smith's entry on the scene, it had become a part of Governor Simpson's policy to galvanize the trade of the Gulf of St. Lawrence into a semblance of its ancient activity. In the early days of the French settlement of Canada, large tracts of wilderness were farmed or leased to

[1] *Memorandum* by Chief Factor Barnston.

various individuals or companies, who in consequence enjoyed a monopoly of the fur-trade and fisheries within the specified boundaries. One tract was termed the King's Domain, within which were established a series of King's Posts. These extended from Port Neuf to Cape Cormorant, a distance of 270 miles, and inland to the dividing ridge between the St. Lawrence and Hudson's Bay.

Some of these trading-posts were over a century old, and there the early French traders had met the tribes of Montagnais and Nascopi Indians coming down at the close of the hunting season from the North. Subsequently, many of these posts belonged to the King's Posts Company. In 1832 they were under lease to a private person at a rental of £1200 a year, who afterwards leased them to the Hudson's Bay Company.[1]

In 1841 the whole of what is called to-day the "North Shore" was virtually a preserve of the Company. Hardly a white man was to be found between Tadousac and Belle Isle who was not an employee. Even in the summer time the coast was unvisited by those fishermen and their families, who now, from Newfoundland, Gaspesia, the Magdalen Islands, and the South Shore, flock to seek their livelihood in the depths of the adjacent

[1] At this time the trading posts were nine in number, — Tadousac, Chicoutimi, Lake St. John, Necobau, Mistassini, Papinachois, Muskapis, Moisie, and Seven Islands; besides Saguenay, Assuapmoussin, and Metabetshuan on Lake St. John. When the Company took over the King's Posts and fisheries four hundred and fifty men were employed and five hundred in the Indian trade. Shortly afterwards several other posts were built and considerable money expended.

waters. The four chief posts, after Tadousac, whither the Montagnais came on their return from the chase, were Godbout, Seven Islands, Mingan, and Musquarro.

Tadousac, on the River St. Lawrence at its confluence with the Saguenay, is only some three hundred miles from Montreal; but the exceeding badness of the roads eastward of Quebec, the solitude and desolation of the scenery, made it, in the first half of the nineteenth century, seem of far greater remoteness.

The young clerk set out by stage-sleigh to Quebec, and on the second day after his departure arrived there. At Baie St. Paul he delivered a message with which he had been provided to an occasional employee of the Company, who was instructed to accompany him and his effects, which consisted of a small hair trunk, and a bag filled with provisions, as far as Tadousac. Here he donned snowshoes. He passed the night at a woodman's cabin, probably the same one that a few years later Robert Michael Ballantyne occupied on his exactly similar journey, and duly arrived at the marvellous and mystic stream of the Saguenay which, owing to its immense depth, never freezes. After some delay, a boat was procured and they crossed to the Hudson's Bay Company's trading-post.

Unlike the posts of the north, it is merely a group of houses, scattered about in a hollow of the mountains, without any attempt at arrangement and with-

out a stockade. The post, when viewed from one of the hills in the neighbourhood, is rather picturesque; it is seen embedded in the mountains and its white-topped houses contrast prettily with the few pines around it. A little to the right rolls the deep unfathomable Saguenay, at the base of precipitous rocks and abrupt mountains covered in some places with stunted pines, but for the most part bald-fronted. Up the river the view is interrupted by a large rock, nearly round, which juts out into the stream and is named "The Bull." To the right lies the Bay of St. Catherine with a new settlement at its head; and above this flows the majestic St. Lawrence compared to which the broad Saguenay is but a thread.[1]

The next seven years of Donald Smith's life were spent on the banks or in the neighbourhood of the St. Lawrence. He served at Isle Jérémie, Godbout, Bersimits, Seven Islands, and Mingan.

It was in this epoch of hard work and loneliness that his native character became subdued to his surroundings. I have heard him say that those years in the neighbourhood of the Saguenay made the deepest impression on his mind. Indeed, it is not too much to assert that the Saguenay left a lasting mark on his character.

Fifty years later in a London gallery he was shown Böckling's powerful "The Island of Death." "Ah, yes," he said seriously, "that, apart from the trees, is exactly like the Saguenay! It recalls my young days as a fur-trader."

The routine observed at one post in the Com-

[1] R. M. Ballantyne, *Hudson Bay.*

pany's service was, with certain local modifications, due to the nature of the trade and the character of the native tribes, followed by all.

When the trading parties arrived [writes a clerk of a generation later], I had to take account of the goods returned and the robes and furs for which the rest of the outfits had been expended, also the Indian debts paid and the supplies given to servants there. And then commenced the lively scene of packing the robes and furs in the big lever fur-press in the middle of the square.

To each pack would be attached a wooden stave on which was branded its consecutive number, weight, and "41—H. B. M. D. T." meaning "Outfit 1841," (H. B.) "Hudson's Bay," (M. D.) Montreal District," (T) "Tadousac." But first of all the furs had to be

hung up on lines like a wash to get rid of the dust in the wind, and the larger and stronger hides beaten like the robes. The finer and weaker-skinned furs were parcelled up in strong-hided and summer bear-skins, and several bundles of these made up the pack to about ninety pounds weight. Each of these fur packs was of assorted skins, and as many packs as possible made up of a uniform number of assorted skins. This was done to avoid the risk of all the articles or furs of one kind being lost in the case of accident. Into each of these packs was put a slip of paper with an unpriced list of its contents and the marks and numbers before mentioned. This slip served to identify the pack or bale if the branded stave became detached, and also it enabled the person in charge of a shipment, which had

got wet on the voyage and required to be opened and dried, to replace the furs belonging to different packs in rebaling them after being dried. The priced packing account of the furs, at the valuation allowed the post in general accounts, was not for the eyes of the men on the voyage with them.

Each business year was called the "Outfit" and ended on May 31, upon which date the inventory of everything belonging to the Company at the post was taken. At this we all worked from dawn to dark till everything was weighed, measured, and counted, both outside and inside the establishment.

The post accounts had to be made out in triplicate for the purpose of sending one copy to Montreal headquarters, one to London, and of retaining one at the post.

Once the list of merchandise and articles in use had been made in pencil it became my task, day and night, to recapitulate them in alphabetical order under the various headings, and enter the result duly priced in the post account book for the "Outfit." To get that book complete so as to find the apparent gain or loss for the year's trade before the time came for the boatmen to start for the annual voyage took up all my time.[1]

One of Mr. Smith's successors at Mingan, George Miles, complained bitterly of the intricacy of Mr. Smith's method of keeping accounts. He said that they were done in accordance with a secret code, the key of which was locked in Mr. Smith's breast. Many of the pages had a marginal note marked

[1] Chief trader Isaac Cowie, *The Company of Adventurers.*

"Donald Smith" and sometimes "Donald S." Many years afterwards a visitor, inspecting these accounts, found an additional memorandum underneath these entries, such as "Hang Donald S.!" and more than once "D—— Donald Smith! I cannot make head or tail of this! G. M."

Up to the time of Donald Smith's entry into the Company's service beaver was the staple fur of the country; but the substitution of silk for beaver in the manufacture of hats dealt a severe blow to the beaver industry. Yet the term "castor" continued in use, throughout most of the Hudson's Bay Territory, to denote the unit of value when trading with the natives. The produce of a winter hunt would be estimated in "castors," and was usually about a hundred, often as low as fifty, and occasionally as high as two hundred and fifty castors. Howbeit, in the Montreal department actual money or notes were used.

Of the furs the most valuable was the black fox, for a single skin of which the hunter would receive as much as five or ten pounds, but which would fetch three or four times as much in the London fur-sales. The silver fox, which only differed from the black in that its coat was sprinkled with a few white hairs, then took second place, the cross fox, the red fox, the white fox, and the blue fox following in order of value.

Lord Strathcona often recalled his first purchase of a black fox. One day news came to his bourgeois[1] that a trapper named Dugas had several fine skins,

[1] The officer in charge of a post was thus called.

but that from some fancied grievance or another he had announced his intention of not selling them to the Company, but would carry them himself to Quebec. The man, who was a half-breed, had halted with his family about twenty miles away, from whence he intended to proceed alone to civilization. Mr. Smith was provided with funds and instructed to be sure to acquire the furs if they were really of superior quality and could be had at a reasonable price. After a long tramp he reached Dugas's encampment. The surly and even insulting reception he met with would have daunted another man. But he was resolved not to lose his temper. Not a word was said about the furs. He assisted the old squaw, whom he addressed as *Madame* Dugas, to boil the pot and cut firewood; he helped skin a rabbit, gave the trapper tobacco, retailed news and anecdotes of mutual friends, sympathizing with Dugas in his grievance against the bourgeois for whose hasty conduct he apologized. But what was of even more potent effect was a little book of *décalcomanie* pictures and a couple of packets of barley sugar which he had thoughtfully slipped into his pocket for the children. These produced a tremendous sensation, and won the heart of mother and children. Evening came and wore on; not a syllable had been mentioned about furs or trade, save that Mr. Smith was going on five miles to another trapper's lodge up the river. At a late hour, after wishing them all a cordial good-night, he rolled himself in his blanket and retired to rest. In the morning he was up

betimes collecting fagots, after which he went down to the river to catch fish for breakfast. On the conclusion of the meal he announced his intention of continuing his journey. He said he had had a most pleasant time and would long remember the hospitality he had received. "Perhaps," he added, "you will still be here on my way back. If so, we may meet again — who knows?" He then shouldered his pack and was shaking hands, when Dugas, who had been standing by in a state of sulky astonishment, cried out, "*Vous n'achetez pas mes fourrures?*"

Whereupon Mr. Smith said: "But, Monsieur Dugas, I did not like to speak to you of business. The bourgeois is very sorry, very sorry to think that you and he should have quarrelled. It is a great pity!"

"*Tenez*," said Dugas; and going to the lodge he brought forth a bundle and opened it, revealing several fine skins, one of which he selected and threw over his left arm, stroking it lovingly and pointing out and commenting upon its glossiness and texture.

"That is the best fox I ever trapped," he said. "This other is nearly as good. I said I would not sell them to the bourgeois and I won't. You are a young man, and perhaps you do not know the value. In Quebec I would get thirty pounds; but I do not wish to leave my family and go to Quebec. You may have them, and if your bourgeois says they are not worth twenty pounds, you may send them back to me. I will not take the money now.

Voilà!" And he pressed the bundle of skins upon the young trader.

"Wait a bit," interrupted Smith "If this is to be business, I must take the responsibility. Let me examine the furs carefully."

The upshot was that he paid Dugas the sum of £23, all the scrip he had upon him, and they parted the greatest friends in the world. Dugas even accompanied Mr. Smith to the camp of the other trapper for whose small catch he insisted in advancing the funds out of what he had been paid, to be returned at Mr. Smith's convenience.[1]

"Nevertheless," the latter used to say, commenting on this episode, "I was not without misgivings when I returned to my post and the bourgeois. He made me lay out the skins for inspection and examined them deliberately in silence, especially the magnificent black fox. At last he said: 'And how much did you pay for this?' I told him, eight pounds. 'Eight pounds, eh!' He examined the skin again. I could not tell from his manner whether he was pleased or angry. 'Eh, well,' he said at last, — 'you did n't do so badly — for a youngster, not so badly. It's worth about double that.'"

Next season when Dugas came to the post he sent on in advance to enquire for his friend, Mr. Donald Smith. And when, a year or two later, his young friend was transferred to another post in the Department, Mr. Smith was by no means astonished to receive a visit from Dugas, who informed

[1] *Memorandum* by Chief Factor Hamilton.

him that he had suffered a terrible bereavement in the loss of his wife, but that he was shortly to be married again as soon as the priest came, and earnestly desired Mr. Smith to assist at the ceremony.

From Donald's letters of this period there are numerous references to his life and neighbours. For example, in one he writes to his sister Margaret: —

I think you would have to travel the whole world over to find a greater contrast to the Scotch than these same Indians. If civilization consists in frugality and foresight, then the Montagnais are far worse than dogs, who at least have sense enough to bury a bone against an evil day. In some of their lodges even before winter has properly begun, their rations have come to an end. Everything about the place has been swallowed that can be swallowed and starvation stares them in the face. They stalk in the tracks of a solitary caribou and in the excitement forget their own hunger, but this does not make their families forget theirs. The caribou eludes them. They wander farther afield and at length bring down a bear. They cut him up and return to find their families dying or dead, which is what happened last month near Manwan Lake.

In another letter he observes: —

The Indians hereabouts are careless about everything, but they do pay some attention to the welfare of the beaver. I have known of their leaving a beaver lodge only half destroyed when they might have taken the whole of the occupants.

. . . . . .

Père Leblanc related a curious thing, that Canada

and Quebec are Montagnais words, the former meaning "going and coming from some place," and the latter, "land here." He has often heard an Indian call out "Quebec" when he wanted the canoe to put ashore. I tried it myself on my guide to-day, and he understood at once. I made him repeat it, and to me it sounded more like "Ke-buc" or "boc." But it is an altogether different derivation from that accepted by the historians of this country.

There was ever from boyhood a strain of superstition in Donald Smith's character, doubtless inherited from Gaelic ancestors. He strongly inclined to a belief in "second sight," in a mysterious prevision of events, of which his own experience furnished numerous instances. More than once he himself had had what are termed "veridical" dreams. It was in January, 1841, that he dreamed that he saw his elder and favourite sister Margaret, lying stretched on her death-bed. Her arms were extended as if to take a final adieu of her brother, while her lips formed mutely a heartrending, "Donald! O Donald!"

He had not heard of Margaret's illness; but he said next morning to a friend, James Anderson, "My sister Margaret is dead."

Some months later a letter from his mother arrived. It told him that his sister had passed away on the 12th of January preceding, the very hour, allowing for the difference in longitude, on which he had dreamed of her death.

It is a pleasant coincidence that the William Jordan, of whom Ballantyne speaks, should have

been also one of Donald Smith's friends. "A fine-looking athletic half-breed, who had been partially educated, but had spent much more of his life among Indians than amongst civilized men."

Mr. Smith's costume, as he mentions, at that time consisted of a red flannel shirt and *étoffe du pays*, or homespun trousers, deerskin moccasins, and a woollen tuque. When he travelled he took a sled on which was a box, containing his blanket, and kettle. He also carried a hunting-knife and a rifle, and sometimes several traps. It must be confessed that to the end of his days of service in the Company, Donald Smith remained an indifferent hand with firearms. Southey, in his *Life of Nelson*, relates that the shooting of the great sea-captain was very dangerous for his companions, "for he carried his gun upon the full cock and the moment a bird rose he let fly without ever putting the fowling-piece to his shoulder." It was therefore related with great pride by his family that he once shot a partridge. Similarly, Donald Smith once shot a wolf, which unprecedented event was briefly narrated in a letter to his mother.

Nor, although there was a horse at the post at Tadousac and he himself introduced this noble animal at a later day into Labrador, was he ever able to ride or drive expertly.

All the country to the north-east of here [Tadousac] is the Montagnais country as far as Swanipie where you meet the Nascopies and after that the Esquimaux. I have tried to ascertain how many Montagnais or

Mountaineers there are. Some say 5000, which is probably a high figure.

I was astonished to see the Montagnais in the woods teaching their children to read according to the principles they had imbibed from the missionaries. Time hangs heavily on their hands and they turn in the family circle for entertainment to the alphabet.

Many of the Roman Catholic missionaries became Mr. Smith's intimate friends. He came to know and correspond with PP. Roy and Paquet, as he did afterwards with PP. Renaud, Babel, and Ferland, and a generation later it was a pious and earnest missionary priest, the venerable Père Lacombe, who became one of his warmest friends in the Canadian North-West.

'You must not be surprised [he wrote as early as 1844] to hear that I am very friendly with the Catholic missionaries of this country whenever and wherever I find them. The Company's policy has always been well disposed towards these brave men: and I am so on personal grounds. The priest at L'Anse St. Jean is a kindly young man, who has suffered many hardships and is ready to suffer more without complaint. I owe a good deal of my proficiency in French and many hours of companionship to him.

Later on, we shall find him making overtures to the Moravian missionaries of Labrador. There are several references to Mr. Smith in the Moravian reports, as in those of Père Babel and others addressed to the *Société de la Propagation de la Foi.*

Godbout, another place where Mr. Smith was stationed, was called after the captain of the Com-

pany's sloop of that name and was established in 1821. In 1846 he writes: —

I went on a visit to Egg Island to-day, where in 1711 Admiral Sir Hovenden Walker's fleet was wrecked and eleven hundred men perished. I had the story of this catastrophe from Père Robert down to the last detail. The fleet was on its way to capture Quebec when a storm arose one August night and dashed it to pieces. The French regarded it as an intervention of Providence and rechristened their church at Quebec "Notre Dame des Victoires" after the event. The huge rock upon which the vessels stranded is to this day called "Pointe aux Anglais." Several cannon have been dragged up here and one is at Mingan. Other articles have been washed up or found at low tide. The island is still a very dangerous place for ships and should have a light.[1]

From Bersimits he wrote: —

This river Bersimits is about two hundred and fifty miles long, but extraordinarily narrow at its mouth — an arpent and a quarter. Fifteen miles up you come across the first portage. It is full of salmon and trout and brochet, but owing to the rapids very hard to catch with the fly.

Some of his observations on Indian customs are interesting: —

A Montagnais will take a piece of birch bark and mark down a few characters in his own language and roll it up and suspend it from a tree somewhat isolated from the rest in the forest, along a route more or less

[1] One was erected there in 1870, largely as a result of his own representations two years previously.

frequented by hunters. It may hang there for a week or a month or two, but some day a Montagnais will come along and see it and read the address, such as Bersimits or Mingan or Musquarro and if he is going that way will carry it along the route and again suspend it until another sees it and by degrees it reaches its destination.

The great preoccupation of the Indian is not to be idle or to amuse himself or to hunt or to fish, but to find food. They would never hunt at all if they were not forced to do it by fear of hunger. Supply him with plenty of provisions, enough to last all winter, and there will be few martens trapped. When I saw a Mountaineer going off with four or five barrels of flour in his canoes, I knew he would do little until that was eaten up. Of economy and frugality they know nothing. They live from hand to mouth and never can tell of what their dinner to-morrow will consist until they trap or shoot it. It may be bear or partridge or caribou or beaver or salmon. The flesh satisfied their hunger and the skins — a secondary consideration — they sell to the trader.

The Company had had a post at Mingan since the middle of the eighteenth century. Owing to certain difficulties with the Mingan seigneur, they established a post first of all on Havre Island, the largest of the islets which close the port; and this is still the property of the Company. There is a building a century and a quarter old, yet in use.

We have here [he wrote] the best harbour on the coast, owing to the islands shielding it from the winds; these dot the coast as far as Point aux Esquimaux. In winter the water between these and the mainland

HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY'S POST AT MINGAN

From the original drawing by William Hind

freezes, a great boon for travellers, who can thus walk, skate, or sleigh by river.

It was at Mingan that a great calamity overtook him in the burning down of his house at the post. He was away at the time the fire broke out and on his return found the whole staff had flung themselves zealously into the task of saving his personal belongings, rather than those belonging to the Company. It shows a curious trait in his character that he at once proceeded to fling his own clothing, books, and other effects upon the flames, remarking, "Let them go, too, if the Company's goods have gone!" [1] Under his superintendence another house was erected which the visitor is shown to-day. The post is little changed. The little Roman Catholic chapel — one of the first established in Canada — still survives.

No account, however summary, of Donald Smith's life at this period should omit mention of his reading, for arduous and occasionally prolonged as his duties were, they still left abundant leisure for the perusal of such books and newspapers as these more or less remote posts could furnish. I find him referring to, as having read, amongst others, Plutarch's *Lives*, Benjamin Franklin's *Correspondence*, Tomline's *Life of Pitt.* and many old volumes of the *Edinburgh Review.*

It was through chance copies of the Montreal *Gazette* and the Quebec *Mercury* that he kept in touch with the outside world, and there are many refer-

[1] I am indebted to Mr. W. D. B. Scott afterwards in charge of Mingan for this anecdote.

ences in his early letters to contemporary affairs in Canada and Britain, a knowledge of which he had derived, many months later, from the well-worn *Gazettes* which, passing from hand to hand, and from post to post, were read and re-read by the young clerk who even at that time was, even in the solitude and silence of the bush, keeping himself in the current of affairs.

Mr. Smith's eyes, which had suffered from snow-blindness, began to give him great pain and anxiety. An old Indian to whom he showed them alarmed him by assuring him he would soon be totally blind.

In November, 1847, having written thrice to the Governor on the subject of his eyesight, he made up his mind that the urgency of the case would brook no further delay and so took passage in the schooner *Marten* for Montreal. On the evening of his arrival he thought it prudent to report himself immediately to Sir George Simpson and explain why he had broken the rules of the service. Simpson was at dinner at his mansion at Lachine [1] when the butler announced the arrival of Mr. Donald Smith, of Mingan.

"Bid him wait in the library," said the Governor. And while the young man waited, he despatched a message to his own medical adviser asking him to step in for a few moments and give a friend the benefit of his counsel. He then appeared to his visitor and in his sternest manner

[1] The walls of this mansion are now incorporated in those of a convent opposite. Close to the canal is a small stone building, the last remaining vestige of the Company's offices at Lachine.

demanded what right he had to leave his post without permission.

"I am threatened with blindness, sir," was the reply. "I addressed several letters to you asking leave at the close of the season to come up to Montreal and consult a surgeon; but was not favoured with a reply."

"Threatened with blindness? Pooh, pooh!" declared Simpson. "However, we will look into this." Turning to the butler, he said: "Serve dinner to Mr. Donald Smith. Afterwards, we will see what the doctor has to say in the matter."

After dinner, which, hungry though he was, Donald had little relish for, he appeared before his host, and the doctor, who, having been made acquainted with all the circumstances of the case, made a rapid examination, and although providing a remedy, declared there was nothing serious the matter with the young man's visual organs.

"No danger of blindness?" asked the Governor.

"Oh, dear, no, Sir George, — none whatever," returned the doctor.

"Then," continued the autocrat, more sternly than ever, although aware that the doctor had already suggested the very treatment for which Smith had made his journey, "this appears to me a serious case of indiscipline. It is now eight o'clock" — here he took out his watch. "I will give you thirty minutes to leave Montreal for your new post."

"My new post?" faltered Smith.

"Yes; you are appointed to the Esquimaux Bay

District and will report yourself forthwith to Mr. Nourse at North-West River Post. There will be no stage available at Quebec for Bersimits. You will proceed on foot via Seven Islands and Mingan to St. Augustine and from thence overland. Good-night, sir." And the inflexible and inexorable Governor turned on his heel.

For a moment the young man hesitated, the spirit of rebellion surging within him. In after years he asked a friend what course he would have pursued at such a juncture. The friend did not hesitate.

"I should have told Sir George Simpson to go straight to h—l, and to take the Hudson's Bay Company with him," he responded.

Lord Strathcona's eye twinkled under his shaggy brows.

"Well," he said slowly, "I too felt like that for a moment. Then I said to myself, 'If Governor Simpson can bring himself to give such an order as that, I can bring myself to carry it out.' And I went."

The journey was in bitter weather, slow and tedious, owing to the snowdrifts. At Bersimits, Smith procured two Montagnais guides, but they were both quite incompetent, and were only tempted by the bribe of pork and flour which Mr. Smith promised them on reaching Seven Islands, for they had not departed with their fellows on the northern hunt, had long since run short of provisions, and the agent at Bersimits had lost patience with them. Paul, the younger of the pair, was a good-looking

fellow of eighteen, already married and a father. On the fourth day they lost their way in a blinding storm, and after resting two days in the woods beside a fire which they kindled with great difficulty, they pressed on. In some manner they bore to the north and struggled on without making Seven Islands, where Mr. Smith had intended a halt. The situation soon became serious. Usually, the Indian plan of discovering the cardinal points of the compass — that is, by cutting off a section of the bark of a tree, the thickest portion indicating the north — can be relied upon. But where a route is unusually tortuous, or where trees are scarce or immature, or the traveller inexpert, the test fails to help him, and he may drift slowly but surely to destruction. Moreover, Mr. Smith began to suffer from frozen feet, and his sight, in spite of the remedies he carried, again gave him acute pain.

The greatest danger lay in the exhaustion of the food supply. Beyond a ptarmigan or two, they were able to shoot nothing. Gradually the trio grew weaker, and at the end of ten days, Paul complained of giddiness and exhaustion, and declared that he could not march another step. That night they had a little moss for supper boiled with the skin of a beaver. Mr. Smith and the elder Indian spent the next day reconnoitring for food. They returned toward nightfall with the remains of a marten to find Paul very ill, indeed. That night was bitterly cold; the fire went out, and he died. In the morning his companions wrapped him carefully in his blanket and suspended the body in a

tree, according to the Montagnais custom. Six days later the pair of survivors arrived at Mingan, where a Mr. Verrall was in charge, in a state little to be envied. Latterly, although they had not actually starved, their food was raw and unsavoury.

Verrall and his wife extended a cordial welcome to their visitor, a warm repast was prepared, and Mr. Smith attacked it ravenously.

Generous as was the hospitality of the Verralls, the young clerk's troubles were not yet over. It was now the middle of January and he had to push on somehow to St. Augustine River in order to reach the trail leading to Esquimaux Bay, hundreds of miles to the north. Again he set out and reached Musquarro. The bourgeois there, Mr. Robert Hamilton, saw that the young traveller was utterly worn out, and, without appearing to disregard Governor Simpson's orders, resolved to keep Mr. Smith through the winter. Smith could not proceed without guides and one of the post Indians, Joseph Obé, was despatched in search of them, who, as was to be expected, were not forthcoming until the approach of spring.

Meanwhile, having enjoyed necessary rest and recuperation for a few weeks, at the end of April, 1848, a couple of guides and a canoe were procured, and he ascended the St. Augustine River. After three weeks' travel he struck into the Grand River, crossed Goose Bay, and duly reported himself to Chief Trader William Nourse at North-West River, at that time the chief of the Labrador posts of the Company.

CHAPTER IV

HIS PROMOTION AND MARRIAGE

1848–1853

LABRADOR, vast, dreary, and solitary plateau as it is, is not all dreariness and solitude. Into those forbidding battlements of ice and rock a great arterial channel penetrates for one hundred and twenty miles to receive rivers and rivulets emanating from the very bosom of the wilderness.

A generation before Donald Smith's day, this wide estuary was known as Invucktoke (or Sea-Cow) Bay, from the uncouth animal then occasionally to be seen about its shores. A few years later, and they had altogether disappeared. These waters, now known variously as Esquimaux Bay, Hamilton Inlet, and Gros Water Bay, were forty miles wide at the entrance, gradually contracting until the "Narrows" are reached, fifty miles inland, when they expand from the width of a mile and a half to a veritable inland sea.

It has been compared to an hour-glass, this great Esquimaux Bay, with its narrow waist, through which the tide ebbs and flows. Between here and the shores of Ungava Bay stretches a great dividing ridge across which barrier the Esquimaux tribes of the North and South rarely, if ever, passed. Each became, therefore, a separate race, and this had of yore been the meeting-place of the southern

Esquimaux. The latter, for at least half a century previously, had not dwelt in ice houses, or dressed wholly in furs, or carried their children in the hoods of their *kossaks;* but had largely adopted European dress and many of the white man's habits and customs. They favoured Invucktoke Bay, because it afforded them in abundance all the things they coveted, whales, seals, codfish, salmon, trout, herring, and numerous sea-fowl; and now the surviving remnant of their race resorted thither owing to the presence of the posts of the Hudson's Bay Company.

To the traveller who has been days in the contemplation of the grim scenery of the Labrador coast, a sail up Esquimaux Bay must always remain a memorable experience. The very atmosphere, shaking off the sea fog, takes on an empurpled warmth. In the distance scores of islands emerge vaguely through the haze; others on nearer view are seen to be overgrown with dwarf spruce and dark green clumps of alder. Moving westward, the high wooded bluffs, rocks, hills, and distant mountains replace the bare, dark, and featureless shore. On the left is a lofty wooded peak known as Mount Nat, up whose slopes the deer flee in summer to escape their insect tormentors. As the traveller continues his westward course, the scenery shifts constantly, the trees take on large growth and the country becomes more generally wooded; Mealy Mountains loom up fifty or sixty miles away, their snow-clad summits gleaming in the sun. Close at hand in the water is the frequent

apparition of a whale, blindly following the tide, and spouting as he rises; seals emerging from the waves to stare at the little ship and disappearing; grampuses frolicking derisively; and in the air strange sub-Arctic birds hover, an easy prey to the most inexpert gunner; saddle-back gulls, bottle-nosed ducks, eiders, hagdon, auks, puffins, gannets, and sea pigeons. At the entrance to the Narrows — the neck of the hour-glass — the hills on either side tower to the height of a thousand feet, forming a spruce-clad shadowy portal for miles. Through this channel the waters of the vast inland Melville Lake sweep with irresistible force. More than one ship and frail craft, unable to cope with this mad rush of water, has shared the fate of the *Cleopatra* man-of-war, and dashed through this foaming space to destruction. Thus, all shipping must come and go with the tide, save the small craft that can take advantage of the eddies and the favourable breeze. Halfway through this foam-splashed gorge the Hudson's Bay Company's post of Rigolet, named from the adjoining rivulet by the French-Canadian traders who built it in 1791, is visible, with the Company's red flag floating from the usual tall staff fixed in the ground, before the agent's house.

There are a number of buildings belonging to the post, comprising dwellings for the officers and servants, as well as storehouses for furs, sales-shops, cooper's shop, oil-house, fish-house, packing-house, and oven-house. Two of the buildings erected by a couple of eighteenth-century French traders from

Montreal still survived, the nucleus of the establishment, and which became the property of the MacGillivrays and the North-West Company.

After leaving Rigolet, bold wooded bluffs continue through the Narrows. At the terminus is a cluster of islands, abreast of which the eye sweeps over a broad sea. The huge Mealy Mountains, two miles away, run parallel with the southern shore of this sea, curious, bizarre, ugly, upstanding masses, which have been compared to a succession of colossal thumbs, or gigantic haycocks, half tumbled over by sportive Titans. One of these, a thousand feet high, called the Broken Mountain, is shaped like a huge inverted bowl, rent asunder from top to bottom. Forty miles from Rigolet is another such hill or mountain, probably cavernous, for those dwelling in the vicinity assert that a man walking upon its top gives forth an echo beneath him as if he strolled on an empty cask, audible for a great distance. Farther on stands an isolated peak, to which Mr. Smith himself gave the title of the "Clerk" from its resemblance to a cloaked figure, seated in the posture of writing. Opposite this point Melville Lake is studded with threescore or more islands, and a few miles farther on, after rounding the low headland, a small cove unexpectedly appears. Here empties the North-West River, and a mile and a half up is the long line of buildings belonging to the Company's trading post. In 1848 there were only three or four buildings in all. The surroundings are picturesque. The course of the river is soon hidden in the recesses of sombre

forest; in the near distance are green-clad hills of varying verdure, with blue mountains beyond; in the foreground sandy soil and patches of turf, already quickened by the warmth of spring.

Ten miles to the north stands a prominent mountain peak, known as Makaumé, forming a conspicuous landmark throughout the region. The Mountaineers (Montagnais) call it *Pootakaboosh-kow* ("That which rises up") and invest it with supernatural attributes, as other tribes do with the rock at Mistassini. They never, in passing, point at or refer to it, believing that if they do so they would invite storms or other misfortunes. Indeed superstition with reference to striking natural objects is very rife. As for the mysterious Grand Falls, the Indians firmly believed it was the haunt of evil spirits and that death would quickly overtake the audacious traveller who dared to gaze upon that mighty descent of waters.

North-West River, at the time of which I write, was the chief station of the Company on the Atlantic seaboard. The Grand River flows into the Bay about twenty-five miles distant.

It was to this post and to such a scene as this that Donald Alexander Smith was introduced at the end of his long journey overland from the St. Lawrence. In the house distinguished by the tall staff before its door dwelt Chief Trader William Nourse. This old officer had had a long and varied experience in the Company's service and was then on the point of retirement. Mr. Smith discovered that he had already departed for Rigolet to meet

the annual Company's ship from Montreal, which discharged its cargo and passengers at that post.

When Mr. Smith arrived at North-West River, the Nascopies had already come down from the interior with their furs, dwelling in the numerous skin-covered lodges arranged in a wide circle near the post. For a long period the Nascopies were the deadly foes of the Esquimaux, whom they held in contempt and against whom they waged constant war. Little was known of their origin or their abiding-place. Travellers had not then penetrated to their retreat to learn their customs and reveal them to the world. Up to about eight years previously (1840) they had held no intercourse with the whites. They were the simplest of savages. They believed in a Supreme Being, the author of all good, and also in a Bad Spirit; to each of whom they offered sacrifices. Their women were abject slaves. Polygamy ruled, the man marrying as many wives as he could support. The aged were killed, the nearest relative being appointed executioner.

The establishment of the Company's trading posts caused many of the Nascopies to become partially civilized, and eager for trade. To Fort Nascopie and North-West River they repaired in the early summer, in canoes laden with the spoils of their winter hunt. After spending a week or ten days in bartering their furs and pelts for the Company's goods, they reëmbarked in their birchen fleets and were seen no more until the following spring.

Altogether this tribe scarce numbered more than

a thousand souls. Owing to a terrible mortality which a little later overtook them, their number in 1860 was reckoned at no more than five hundred.

They spoke a dialect of the Cree language, almost identical with that spoken on the North Pacific coast. In person they were generally tall, straight, graceful, of light complexion and pleasing features. By some it was credited that these Labrador Nascopies had a tinge of French blood in their veins. Even beyond other savages was their passionate fondness for dress; their native garments were of softest buckskin, moulded to the figure, decorated with brilliant pigments, and embroidered in silk, with designs representing birds, flowers, and natural objects. A scarlet sash was worn over the tunic about the waist, the flowing ends of which reached to the knees. The squaws were attired in petticoats and trousers of a cut and quality much inferior to their lords' and masters'. On their heads were tall conical caps of bright-hued flannel, ornamented with beads, and sometimes with bears' and eagles' claws. The style of dressing the hair differed from that of other tribes, the women parting theirs behind, drawing it forward and dressing it in oval-shaped bunches on either side of the head, while the men wore theirs in queues, decorated with beads, and terminating in a bead tassel. An indispensable article of dress was the long fur gauntlet, which was held in place by a thong passed over the shoulders. Gradually a number came to adopt the dress of the whites, but countenanced only the finest cloth, and that of the gaudiest col-

ours. Chief Thomas Chimo, who succeeded Chief Paytabais, was partial to lace. Chimo is described as a man of fifty years, short in stature, and boasting of but one arm, the other having been shot off by accident. On that occasion he was, with true Indian stoicism, his own surgeon, amputating the mangled limb with his hatchet.

Nomadic in their habits, the Nascopies rarely lingered even in mid-winter for more than a week in one spot. In every direction they traversed the snow-clad forests, setting their traps wherever game seemed prevalent, or tracking the caribou in his mossy feeding-ground. In these quests their worldly goods were hauled upon sleds, all marching in single file, the better to make a beaten track, the post of leader being taken in rotation. The sleds were fashioned of thin birchen boards, turned up in front, like a toboggan. At night when they grew weary and camped, they thrust their legs into capacious bags lined with eider-down, which ensured them a warm slumber. The spoils of the chase were equally divided amongst the party. A successful hunt was followed by a feast lasting four or five days, until a disgusting surfeit produced exhaustion. For small game bows and arrows were used, but for the larger animals they had adopted firearms in the use of which they soon became singularly expert.

As indispensable as were the bison or buffaloes to the Western tribes or as seals to the Esquimaux were the native deer or caribou to the Nascopies. These were very numerous, ranging in herds from

the coast of Labrador to the interior and back again, following regular routes of travel at certain seasons of the year, so that the sagacious hunter was nearly always able to trace them to their haunts. As is the case with most of the birds and animals of the North their colour alters. In summer they are of a dark grey and in winter white, a protecting provision of nature against their enemies. It has been said that, "when man goes forth upon the snow to hunt, where upon the spotless mantle the smallest dark object would be readily detected, then they are robed in white. The white partridge flies up from his very feet, where he perceived but lumps of feathery snow. The deer, bear, fox, ermine — all clad in white — pass him with impunity. In the summer they are slaty and mouse-coloured, like the rocks, or wood-coloured, like the trees; and in many an imaginary rock, stick, or stub there is animal life, which will take to itself legs or wings when opportunity of easy escape offers."[1]

Such were the Nascopies with whom Donald

[1] A clerk at Mingan, writing to ex-Chief Trader William Kennedy in 1855, says: "Starvation has, I learn, committed great havoc among your old friends the Nascopies, numbers of whom met their death from want last winter; whole camps of them were found dead, without one survivor to tell the tale of their sufferings; others sustained life in a way most revolting — by using as food the dead bodies of their companions; some even bled their own children to death, and sustained life with their bodies!" In another letter it was stated, "At Fort Nascopie, the Indians were dying, dozens by starvation; and among other, your old friend, Paytabais." Such incidents, inseparable from the Indian's mode of life and his improvidence, could not be guarded against, for once provisions were exhausted at the fort, it took weeks to renew them.

Smith was now destined to become intimately acquainted, as he had previously become familiar with the Montagnais or Mountaineers, and amongst whom he came to number many personal friends. A report which he wrote upon them in the winter of 1851–52 has unfortunately been lost.[1] There are many passages in his letters and reports concerning the Nascopies.

After a brief sojourn at North-West River, Mr. Smith departed to report himself to his superior officer, in company with a clerk named James Grant, leaving another clerk, Joseph MacPherson in charge of the post. He arrived at Rigolet on the 3d of July, 1848. A few days later the Company's supply ship had arrived and all was bustle and confusion.

This [wrote a visitor a dozen years later[2]] is the liveliest portion of the year at the Company's post. Long days of active labour, and nights of mirth and gayety, from which brief hours are snatched for repose, fill up the fleeting respite of a rigorous winter. Esquimaux *toupiks* dot the shore, swarming with the swarthy tenants, who have assembled to barter the season's catch of salmon, sealskins, and oil. The few white settlers on the Bay are here for a like purpose. Trade goes briskly on in the long salesroom of the shop. The Company's vessel has carried her annual freight of "returns" to the *dépôt* at Cartwright's, and is now here awaiting a fair wind to convey the yearly

[1] It was burnt, together with many of Lord Strathcona's early papers at the Board of Trade Building fire in Montreal some years ago.

[2] Charles Hallock, now (1915) Dean of the Smithsonian Institution, Washington.

supplies to the "North-West" station and interior posts. A few Nascopies have straggled down from above in full panoply of beads and buckskin. There is Michelet, an old Canadian *voyageur*, with his Esquimaux wife and seven children, each of them, from the mother to the babe, gifted with an extra pair of perfectly formed fingers and toes — a six-fingered family, and Oliver, an Orkneyman, one of the hardiest and most trustworthy of the Company's servants, and the best dog-driver on the Bay. He has driven from Rigolet to North-West River and back, one hundred and twenty miles, in eighteen hours, changing dogs but once.

Besides the Nascopies, a few Esquimaux frequent the post at Rigolet, but they are a perishing race in spite of the efforts of the Moravian missionaries. They were even then rapidly diminishing — so rapidly that it was easy to mark, within a generation, the progress toward extinction of a nation (the great *Innuit*, i.e., the people) that once controlled more than five thousand miles of seacoast, and were wont to consider themselves as numerous as the waves of the sea. There has always been much speculation concerning the origin of this people. The fact that the skins of their infants are fair and white, which grease, smoke, and filth eventually darken, proves that they have nothing in common with the other native races of this continent. They are probably allied to the Lapps, whom they resemble in many respects. That a family of Esquimaux actually crossed to Labrador from the north shore of Hudson Strait, in 1839, on

a raft constructed of driftwood, as stated by Chief Trader McLean, then resident at Ungava Bay, suggests that these people originally came from Asia. It is certain that they are a people of superior intelligence, with a written language, identical from Labrador to Behring Straits.

In 1848, probably not more than a thousand were living south of the Ungava district. In 1860 the entire Esquimaux population of Labrador was estimated by the head of the Moravian Mission at scarce more than this number. By general consent the influence of the Moravians was beneficial. Polygamy for instance, once common, had become rare. An old patriarch of the Bay, known as "Ike the Mormon," had in Mr. Smith's time five wives, but his case was exceptional, for marriages were contracted under the Moravian ritual, and Ike's marital relations must have been assumed without sanction. Moreover, large numbers were saved by the Moravians from starvation. They were taught to be industrious and provident. At each of the four mission stations the quaint, two-storey, red-painted chapel arose from a cluster of native huts. There were gardens where the more hardy vegetables were raised, a store, and workshops for the native tradesmen. Whatever provisions the Esquimaux procured were placed at the missionaries' disposal, and by them distributed in the best manner for the general good. Waste and improvidence were thus guarded against. In times of scarcity the Brethren opened their own stores for distribution. The product of the winter hunt and summer fisheries were

disposed of in trade, and shipped in a vessel which sailed annually to England; but the profits accruing were thrown into the general fund.

Very early was Mr. Smith's interest excited in the work of the Moravians, and a visit paid to their rude farm at Hebron first turned his attention to the agricultural possibilities of Esquimaux Bay and ultimately to his own model farm and dairy at North-West River.

It was at Rigolet that summer that Mr. Smith made the acquaintance of Mr. Henry Connolly, the clerk in charge of the post, destined to be a lifelong friend and his own successor as agent in Esquimaux Bay.[1]

Returning to North-West River, a new scene of energy presented itself. John McLean had established for the Company, a decade before, the interior post of Nascopie, at the height of land three hundred miles to the west. Annually in the late summer the *voyageurs* prepared for their arduous journey to Fort Nascopie. Two *batteaux* heavily laden with the supplies were each manned by eight stalwart men. When all was ready they bade their companions at North-West River farewell, and with hearty cheers pulled away. After smooth water, the *portages* began, fifty miles of the great dividing ridge separating the waters that flow north and west of Hudson's Bay, and south to the River and Gulf of St. Lawrence had to be climbed. The

[1] Mr. Connolly was the son of Chief Factor William Connolly, one of the pioneers in New Caledonia. He entered the Company's service in 1837, and left it in 1875 with the rank of Chief Trader. He died in 1900.

face of the country is wholly altered, the rocks are jagged and precipitous, abounding in rifts and ravines, with lofty waterfalls. The merchandise was strapped upon the backs of the *voyageurs*, one hundred and eighty pounds to each man, who, climbing the steep ascent with comparative ease, transferred their burdens to the canoes previously carried to the slack water above. No fewer than twenty falls and rapids were passed in the journey, each involving a *portage*. One of these cataracts was among the highest in the world, known as the Grand Fall. It is two hundred and seventy miles from the coast, and was discovered by Chief Trader McLean in 1838. Three miles above the fall the river suddenly contracts from a width of six hundred to one hundred yards; then rushing along its gloomy channel in a continuous, foaming rapid, again contracts to a width of fifty yards, leaps through a cloud of ever-rising spray into a chasm four hundred feet deep, and then roars and foams through zigzag walls of rock, three hundred feet high, for a distance of thirty miles. The roar of the Grand Fall can be heard twelve miles away, and the spray that rises from the chasm can be seen that distance in clear weather. At the verge the precipice vibrates fearfully, and it is almost impossible to see the basin into which the plunge is made, for it is concealed from view by an abrupt angle which the rocks form immediately below. The mighty gorge itself is not apparent to the visitor until his feet are nearly upon the dizzy brink, so level is the ground and so precipitous the impending walls.

The Grand Fall

A *détour* of twenty miles through a chain of lakes and streams was found necessary to circumvent the Grand Fall. The whole journey occupies a month. Fort Nascopie is just halfway to Ungava Bay. The Company formerly had a post called Fort Chimo, upon a river of that name, near the Bay, but Sir George Simpson abandoned it as unprofitable. It was reserved to Chief Factor Donald Smith to reopen this post and the whole of the abandoned Ungava district. Northward to Ungava Bay the character of the country is distinguished by alternate belts of heavy timber and bare hills, interspersed with lakes, rivers, and streams of varied extent. From Fort Nascopie there are trails leading to the Company's territory in the Far West, and there were several in Mr. Smith's day who had actually traversed the vast distance between North-West River and the Red River of the North.

We here inland [he wrote in 1850] have little reason to complain. Although the coast is barren we are favoured with trees such as spruce and larch, birch and rowan, fir and willow — not at all scrubby, but many of a girth sufficient for ship's timber. Then we have an abundance of berries and of many varieties — horts or whortleberries, bilberries, cranberries, raspberries, bake-apples and teaberries. We can, if we choose, make our tea of the Labrador tea-plant and our beer by boiling the tips of young spruce foliage and flavoring it with molasses. . . . For one month in summer we have salmon, and excellent trout all the year round, catching the latter in winter by cutting a

hole in the ice and letting down a hook baited with a piece of raw meat. Down the Bay come great shoals of kippling every year, which are pursued by devouring cod, which latter fish, of course, forms the mainstay of the Labrador fishery. When what is called the kippling school appears, every fisherman on the coast is on the *qui vive* with traps and seines, often going without sleep for days together.

The principal food animals here are the caribou and the black bear. As to our game birds we have partridges, i.e., willow grouse, the Canada goose, and several sorts of duck.

In the summer time the plague of black flies and mosquitoes rendered life a hardship. Fifty years later Lord Strathcona described grimly to Lady Aberdeen the ravages they made. "He told us of the terrors of the Labrador mosquitoes and how they have vanquished men who would fly from no other enemy. He instanced one case in which a friend of his was so sensitive to their bites that he had to stop every half-hour on the march to wash away the blood from his head and face."

When winter came there were traps to set, and many long tramps on snowshoes and occasionally with the dogs to visit them. The very first winter his fellow clerk, Joseph MacPherson, was sent on a mission to a distant band of trappers. He lost his way and eventually came to the Grand Fall, the second white man, it is believed, to behold that marvel. MacPherson had a narrow escape from perishing by hunger, but managed to hold out until he could gain Fort Nascopie.

Both at Rigolet and North-West River, there were officials known as head-packer and storeman. During the busy season Mr. Smith, superintending the work, "never seemed to find time to sleep."

What a clerk of a somewhat later day wrote was true of Donald Smith's youth: —

I was kept continually on the move attending to the packing account, telling the men whose provisions were weighed how much they came to at so many pence per pound, and then marking down each article they got in exchange, with frequent pauses to tell the Indian how much in pounds, shillings, and pence he had left. The same with furs, merely exchanged for their value in goods; for our traders and interpreters found it difficult to calculate in the complicated pound, shilling, and pence standard which had recently been introduced, instead of the well and easily understood "Made Beaver" standard. Whoever was the Hudson's Bay official who superseded the simple "skin way" for the "money way" of trading with Indians, he certainly gave us no end of torment and trouble. It was alleged that the object of the change was to meet competition by paying the Indians full value for their products and do away with the old established system of giving them gratuities in the way of ammunition and other articles, including, I think, "regales" of rum before Swain River was put on the Hudson's Bay Company's list of teetotal districts. Now an Indian was never satisfied with a trade which was a fair and exact change at the fixed prices of the time, until he had received "something for nothing" on the top of the transaction. It did not matter if a trader raised the prices of furs and lowered the prices

of goods to him on the distinct understanding that no present was to be expected or given, the Indian always insisted on that "something for nothing," so dear to all man and womankind, at the end of the barter. So what between the elaborate lecture on the mysteries of British sterling currency, without the aid of the never visible actual coin for demonstration purposes, which I had to deliver on nearly every important trade in which I took part, and the absolute failure of the exposition to enlighten the Indian on it, I had many a vexing hour, and in explaining too, that it was beyond my power to alter the new and odious system.[1]

It was the custom amongst the traders when furs were brought in by the Indians to examine them hastily and pitch them into a corner. Lord Strathcona used to recall that when the elder Connolly was transferred to the Montreal department, where paper money was in vogue, he found great difficulty in accustoming himself to its use. On one occasion a man entered the store and, purchasing articles to the amount of twenty shillings, tendered a one-pound note, which Connolly absent-mindedly threw into a corner along with the peltries, where it was luckily found next morning.

Not long was the newly-arrived trader in exploring his surroundings. Just across from the mouth of the North-West River, on the south side of Lake Melville, is a small bay into which empties the Kenamou and Kenamich Rivers. The former stream is much the larger and drains an extensive area of the highlands to the south-west. It is so

[1] Trader Isaac Cowie.

rapid and full of shoals as to be practically unnavigable. Above North-West River the inlet has been silted up by sand brought down and deposited by the Hamilton River, which flows into the head of the inlet. Extending from the north shore just above North-West River is a long, narrow point, which separates the shallows from the deeper portion of the inlet, the upper part being called Goose Bay. This is twenty miles long and at its head it receives a small river, famous for the large brook trout that have been taken here in the fall of the year. Here Donald Smith was wont to fish, and many a finny prize rewarded his patience and skill in the days before the increase of the Company's salmon business detained him until the dawn of winter at Rigolet or Indian Harbour. [1]

In Lake Melville was situated Gull Island, which enjoyed much local fame by reason of a native romance and tragedy which Donald Smith duly relates. It seems that a young and good-looking half-breed laid siege to the heart of an Esquimaux maiden. The girl was won, but not so the parents. In consequence, the lovers took flight, crossed the bay in a boat, and landed upon Gull Island. Here they wandered together gathering wild flowers. While thus engaged, a storm rose and the placid

[1] "He told me that he went out once at Rigolet in an Esquimaux *kyak* and had only gone a short distance from the wharf when he upset and nearly drowned before he was rescued, a *kyak* being a dangerous craft for a novice to navigate. 'That,' said he, 'was my first and last attempt to sail the seas in a *kyak*. I went straight home and took a glass of wine, the only time, by the way, I ever tasted liquor by myself.'" (*Memorandum* by ex-Factor Duncan Matheson.)

bay became a foaming sea. Observing this, the fond pair hurried to the spot where they had moored their boat. It was gone, wrenched away from its moorings. The discovery must have filled them with despair indeed. To attempt to swim the lake, even if Esquimaux were skilled in that art, would have been fatal. Death by starvation, therefore, was inevitable, and they evidently perished in each other's arms. The following winter, the bay was frozen over; the girl's father was driving by with his dog team when the dogs unaccountably refused to pass the island. In vain the driver used his whip; the howling beasts turned aside from the track and soon began pawing in the snow. A shrivelled arm was exposed and gradually the bodies of the lovers were disclosed to view. Adjacent was the broken thong of deer's hide, which had served as the boat's painter fastened to a rock, and lo, the mystery of their sad fate was revealed!

At the close of his first year Donald Smith writes home to his mother, then recently widowed: —

MacPherson and I had an adventure to-day in the woods. We heard piercing yells, and hastening towards the spot found a rather pretty Esquimaux girl who had sprained her ankle. Her attempt to walk had only made it worse; it had swollen to about twice its normal size. There was nothing to do but to carry her nearly a mile into the Esquimaux camp. You would hardly believe that this was a very repugnant task: as a matter of fact, none in my experience was ever more so. The odour of these people when they are sufficiently animated is not very pleasant: the effluvia

of this young lady was really overpowering, and we were glad when our job was over, and we deposited her with her parents. Even then we were considerably delayed, first by explanation, which at first they refused to believe, and afterwards by their gratitude. There was a good deal of merriment when we returned to the house, for the others had somehow got *wind* of the affair.[1]

This was not Smith's only adventure in which a damsel of the native races was concerned, for in 1852, — the year, by the way, in which he was appointed Chief Trader, — he was travelling some miles from North-West River in the wake of a party of Nascopies who were suspected of carrying off some merchandise which did not belong to them, when he came across the recumbent figure of a young girl asleep, as he supposed, on the ground, which was lightly covered with snow. On closer examination his fears were aroused: the poor creature was in the last stage of exhaustion. He administered brandy and she revived sufficiently to let him know that she had been seized by a terrible illness, accompanied by delirium, in the midst of which she had been abandoned by her father and the rest of the party. How long she had been lying thus in the open, exposed to the elements without care or

[1] On another occasion he writes: — "Unless you have actually been a witness of their table performances you would not believe what an Esquimaux family can consume at a single sitting. They will eat such a breakfast as a hearty white man will put away, and this merely as a relish. I have also seen one man drink eleven cups of coffee, each with several spoonfuls of sugar as an accompaniment to a meal of bread, pan-cakes, bear's meat, half-raw fish, and other delicacies."

nourishment, was never known. She was brought to the factory, but after lingering for eight days, she died and was buried in the adjacent burying-ground. It furnished a striking example of the callousness which is sometimes exhibited by these nomadic tribes. The excuse they offered was their fatalism. They had left the girl to the mercies of Manitou, who would do what He thought best. But it is more than probable that they suspected smallpox or some almost equally dreaded disease.

Donald Smith, who had not yet completed his twenty-eighth year, was still in the first weeks of what was destined to be a long exile in Labrador when, a thousand miles away, across the plateau, midway in the long and lonely trail which led to Red River, an event was shaping which would exert a permanent influence on his future life and happiness.

Late on the afternoon of the 19th of June, 1848, a young clerk at the Hudson's Bay post at Mattawa, where the river of that name empties into the greater flood of the Ottawa, descried a large Indian canoe sweep round the distant bend of the river. Throughout a long life the watcher retained a vivid recollection of the scene — the grateful warmth of the evening, the sights and sounds of spring, always tardy in these regions, the sun's rays reddening the placid waters, the waving of hands and the sound of girlish laughter from the still distant canoe, whose occupants were amongst the first to descend that season from the icy regions of Hudson's Bay. In another moment the whole staff had been sum-

moned to greet the new arrivals and assist them to disembark. They proved to be Mr. Richard Hardisty, late Chief Trader in the Kinogimmise District, and his family on their way to Montreal. The family consisted of Mrs. Hardisty (*née* Sutherland), a dark, *petite* creature, still of great beauty, their daughter Isabella, and two sons, Thomas and Henry. Of these, Isabella was a most agreeable, vivacious young lady of nineteen or twenty, who had lately returned from an English boarding-school, where she had passed five happy years. All were accorded a hearty welcome by the factor at Mattawa; the evening was spent pleasantly and the next day the Hardistys and their Indian guides and servants resumed their long journey down the Ottawa.

On their arrival at Lachine, Mr. Hardisty had an interview with Governor Simpson, the upshot of which was that he also found himself transferred to the Esquimaux Bay district of Labrador. The Company's steamer was on the point of starting on her annual voyage down the St. Lawrence and through the Straits of Belle Isle to Rigolet and other Labrador stations. Mr. Hardisty, his wife, Isabella, and another daughter, Maria, who had been at school in Montreal, embarked in the vessel. They met many icebergs, but otherwise the voyage was uneventful. On arrival at Rigolet, they were met by Chief Trader Nourse, who surrendered his charge of Esquimaux Bay into Mr. Hardisty's hands, and after a few days' sojourn conducted the latter and his family upstream to the more com-

fortable post of North-West River, which was to be the home of the Hardistys for some four years, and of Isabella for nearly twenty.

It was then that Donald Smith and Isabella Hardisty first met.

There has been some idle talk concerning the relationship which subsequently grew out of this meeting, but it is based on a misconception of the marriage laws and customs then prevailing in the Hudson's Bay Company's territories. The ordinance of marriage there, entered into by the mutual consent of the parties, was as solemnly respected as it is in Scotland, where the simple consent of both contracting parties is as binding as all the solemn covenants and ritual of the Church. In this manner a union between Miss Hardisty and Mr. Grant had been entered into; but after a brief but unhappy experience, it was duly annulled. A few months afterwards, on March 9, 1853, she married Mr. Smith, who had meantime succeeded Chief Trader Richard Hardisty in charge of the district. In the following year, the only child of this union, the present Baroness Strathcona and Mount Royal, was born.[1]

[1] She was born on the 17th of January, 1854, and was given the names of Margaret Charlotte, the former being that borne by Donald Smith's favourite sister, who had died on January 12, 1841.

CHAPTER V

LIFE AT ESQUIMAUX BAY

1853–1860

"THE life of a Hudson's Bay factor in Labrador," writes one[1] who in these latter days has made that country his own in a measure and manner comparable only to Donald Smith's association with the peninsula, "does not offer all the joys of civilization; but it offers a field to develop courage, muscle, resourcefulness, and self-reliance to an eminent degree. It makes men who shoot straight, fear nothing, and live hard. It offers the simple life, with its many advantages, and it breeds hospitality, a brotherliness to one's kind, a readiness to stand by any one in distress, that, in our complex life in cities and even villages, we rarely find ourselves called on to exercise. Never has a visitor travelled our coast but his heart has gone out equally to all the brave men of these two great organizations, the Moravian Missions and the Hudson's Bay Company."

The subject of this memoir led this life for twenty years. If the land thus moulded, toughened, and fortified his character, if it exerted an influence upon any of its traits or of his habits, he in turn

[1] Dr. W. T. Grenfell, C.M.G., in whose beneficent mission Lord Strathcona took a deep and practical interest, as will be duly narrated.

reacted upon the land.[1] It was once said by an American orator that if Providence had sent his hero to the North Pole, he would have "found a means of generating heat from polar magnetism, dissolved a canal between the glaciers to carry to the Esquimaux market cabbages grown in the fructifying heat of the *Aurora borealis*." Donald Smith was assuredly something of this type of man. "So diversified had been his reading in his younger years," writes Dr. Robert Campbell, an old and valued friend, "that few topics could be started in his presence to which he was not able to make a contribution. Philosophy, history, political economy, medicine, and divinity his stalwart understanding had studied and made its own. Left alone with his books and his thoughts, he had pondered much over the great problems besetting human life. The self-discipline through which he passed during these solitary winters in Labrador made him the strong man, independent alike in his thinking and acting, that he afterwards showed himself. Among other volumes in the 'post's' library were works on zoölogy and botany, and these he perused with great care, so as to enable him to identify the few animals and plants inhabiting the country which he was wont to traverse."

Although the descriptions and nomenclature of the books he studied differed not a little from those now employed, he knew the things and was able to

[1] With all that life behind him, he was able long afterwards to say that he could look back upon it with gratitude. "A man who has been frozen and roasted by turns every year," he added, "must be the tougher for it, if he survive it at all."

differentiate them, while confessing that he could not attach to them their technical specific names. He knew all about the polar bear, the walrus, the eider-duck, and the wild goose, as well as about the fur-bearing animals, in which as a trader he was an interested expert. In like manner, he recognized the mosses, the lichens, and stunted shrubs which were found growing in the crevices of the rocks on their surface. He also acquired a clear insight into the peculiarities of the Esquimaux, of the Montagnais and other Indian tribes, with whom business brought him in contact, and of whom he was ever ready to become a champion. And as he appreciated their finer native qualities, so they reciprocated his kind sympathy with them by reposing in him implicit confidence. He was to them at once physician and priest, healing their sick, marrying them, and burying their dead. His dealings with the natives helped to make him a keen, shrewd judge of men. His shaggy brows gave to his eyes a telescopic look significant of his penetrating perception and far-sightedness. The fuller intercourse he had with mankind developed his instinctive politeness which rested on consideration for others. He became affable to a degree and no one had a finer courtesy. All these qualities he early showed, and the influence of the culture he acquired in his many-sided reading in the wilds of Labrador continued perceptible throughout his long life. "Two useful habits he formed at that time which were of service to him ever afterwards. One was that of composition. He became master of a terse, incisive

style of writing. Twice a year, when the semi-annual mail arrived and departed, he sent long letters to his mother in Scotland, detailing his experiences and giving an account of how he passed his time. The other valuable habit which he early formed was the saving one. There were, of course, few temptations for the spending of money at Hamilton Inlet in any case; but he made it one of his maxims to lay by one half of his earnings, even when, in the period of his apprenticeship, his salary was only two shillings a day."[1]

Abstemious and parsimonious as regards himself, he was ever seeking to raise the standard of comfort and material prosperity of those about him and of those interests confided to his charge. One of his first acts as Chief Trader was to take steps to provide the Company's servants in the district with a source of wholesome vegetable food. To accomplish this involved the establishment of a farm and a somewhat more scientific knowledge of agriculture than any one on the Bay coast possessed. His keen eye had already marked the natural advantages of the land about North-West River. He proceeded, therefore, to lay out a farm, which, for a while, excited the derision of the trappers, fishermen, and "planters" of the entire coast, until this feeling became changed for one of astonishment and admiration. Two worn, calf-bound volumes which lie before me — MacIntosh's *Book of the Garden*, and Lindley's *Theory and Practice of Horticulture*, the fly leaves of both of which are in-

[1] Dr. Robert Campbell.

scribed," Don. A. Smith, North-West River, Esquimaux Bay, 1855 "— reveal something of his preoccupations at this time. He sent to the Orkneys for seeds, for poultry, and for hardy cattle, and to Canada for horses and sheep. Meanwhile, he had dug and fertilized the land according to the most enlightened methods. He early put to the test his belief in the value of fish offal as a soil fertilizer. To what perfection in a very few years Mr. Smith's farm attained, I offer one piece of testimony as striking as it is unexpected. It is an account of a visit paid to Labrador in 1860 by a party of Americans of scientific tastes and pursuits, primarily to observe the solar eclipse of the year. The writer of the article, Mr. Charles Hallock, afterwards Dean of the Smithsonian Institute at Washington, describes how he and some of his more adventurous companions penetrated up the Bay and landed on the beach at North-West River to be confronted by the trim and tidy buildings of the Company's post. The writer proceeds: —

Then the astonished ear is greeted with the lowing of cattle and the bleating of sheep on shore; and in the rear of the agent's house are veritable barns, from whose open windows hangs fragrant new-mown hay; and a noisy cackle within is ominous of fresh-laid eggs! Surely Nature has been remarkably lavish here, or some presiding genius, of no ordinary enterprise and taste, has redeemed the place from its wilderness desolation! Both are true. The climate is much warmer here than upon the coast, and there is a fair admixture of soil. Donald Alexander Smith, the intelligent

Agent of the post, is a practical farmer, and, by continued care and the employment of proper fertilizing agents, succeeds in forcing to maturity, within the short summer season, most of the vegetables and grains produced in warmer latitudes.

He has seven acres under cultivation, of which a considerable portion is under glass. There are growing turnips, pease, cucumbers, potatoes, pumpkins, melons, cauliflowers, barley, oats, etc. Corn will not ripen, nor even form upon the ear. Before Smith's house is a flower-garden. Here, too, is a carriage road two miles long (strange sight in this roadless country!), upon which the agent betimes indulges in the luxury of a drive; for he has two horses which he employs upon the farm. A bull, twelve cows, half a dozen sheep, goats, fowls, and dogs comprise his live-stock. There is no other place like Smith's in Labrador, in all its area of 420,000 square miles! [1]

Of "Smith's Farm" and its directing spirit an epic might be made. All the prevalent conditions being considered, it was an achievement in itself worthy of the man. It was his first great achievement, and in Labrador it made him famous. I have heard him relate the building of his first strip of roadway — the difficulties encountered, the carrying and breaking of the stone, the disheartening subsidences, the "washouts," the alternate bribes and threatenings of the labourers in order to finish a section before the frost set in, and his pride when the first wheeled cart — the first in all Labrador — rolled swiftly over its surface. This was the same man who a generation later drove the last spike of a

[1] *Harper's Magazine*, December, 1861.

road which connected the Atlantic Ocean with the Pacific and with the same sort of pride watched the first locomotive pass over that steel highway!

But, in truth, the farm and what his friend Mr. Connolly at Rigolet called "estate improvements" occupied only a secondary place in Donald Smith's thoughts and scheme of life.

Not long after he became a Chief Trader a marked change came over the character of the Company's operations in Esquimaux Bay. More and more attention came to be paid to fish, chiefly salmon, to sealskins and seal-oil.

Long before there was a cod-fishery in Labrador, there was fishing for salmon and its export to England. That old pioneer Cartwright wrote in 1779: "In Eagle River we are killing 750 salmon a day, or 35 tierce, and would have killed more had we had more nets." Between June 23 and July 20 in the same stream he killed 12,396 fish, or 300 tierce. The flavour of the Labrador salmon was and is highly esteemed, and packed and salted in barrels it long fetched a good price in the London market. From an early period the Hudson's Bay Company saw the advantages of netting the Labrador rivers, employing the fur trappers who were idle during the summer season.

In 1854, a treaty was negotiated with America by which, in return for allowing the fishermen of that nation a share in the fisheries, the duties were taken off the product in the American markets. A trade in fresh salmon was beginning to be profitable here as at the St. Lawrence stations. Packed

in ice, salmon came to be carried to London, to Boston, and to other ports, even to New York and to the Far West.

Dr. Henry Yule Hind[1] wrote, a decade later: —

> The expectation is far from being visionary that the salmon of the rivers tributary to the Gulf, securely packed in ice, will find their way as far south as New Orleans. When the Intercolonial Railway is completed, the task will be comparatively easy; the vessels from the north shore may land their cargoes at Gaspè, where ice to any extent can be laid up in store. The ice vessels trading to New Orleans, from Boston, and other northern ports, will afford an excellent means, when peace is established, for conveying the salmon of the cold Gulf of St. Lawrence to the almost tropical shores of the Gulf of Mexico; or they may find a more expeditious passage by the railroads in the valley of the St. Lawrence and the steamers of the Mississippi.

"The people on the coast of Labrador," Donald Smith told the Canadian House of Commons, many years later, "were an honest and industrious but very poor people, living from hand to mouth. At first they looked upon that treaty with dread, fearing the competition of the Americans. The fact was, that when the Americans came the Canadians worked themselves still more, and in a few years, instead of being so very poor, with very few of the necessaries of life, and none of the luxuries, they became a well-to-do people. The number of

[1] I cannot refrain from paying here a passing tribute to this eminent geologist and traveller, whose works on Labrador and the Red River country were of great value in their day and are still of interest.

their fish yearly increased, and they found that, man to man, they were as good as those rivals they had so dreaded. They became more manly and felt they were quite able to compete with the Americans." [1]

Yet this new order of things meant double labour to the Company's Chief Agent and his staff, of which Sir George Simpson and the home authorities seem to have been complacently unaware. "We are all sadly overworked here," wrote Mr. Smith from Rigolet in 1856. "Our business is increasing each season, yet we have the same number of labourers and we are not expected to increase our expenses."

Years later a not unworthy successor of Mr. Smith at Rigolet thus vigorously expressed himself: —

I have worked like a slave since I have been here, and like yourself I am glad to say that my tough labours have been crowned with success.

The collection of salmon at this post alone amounts to 370 tierces against 95 sent to the London market last outfit. At Cartwright, in Sandwich Bay, there are ready for shipment 360 tierces; from these two places alone we ship 730, against 401 packages sent to London last year, including Ungava and other northern sections. If Ungava does its quota, we should ship between 11 and 1200 tierces.

. . . I am simply carrying on the business to the best of my ability, and doing for that thankless old hulk, [i.e., the Company] as if it were my own personal busi-

[1] *Debates:* Speech on the Washington Treaty, 1872.

ness and property. What in Heaven's name can they know in Winnipeg or Montreal about such a wandering mixed business as we have to deal with here! It is enough for them to understand the results and be satisfied with the explanations we choose to render them.[1]

Great was the competition to get first to market, whether in England, St. John's, or Boston, with the fish, the first cargo always commanding a higher price. Mr. Smith never spared himself at such times. Even to this day legends are current of his feats of continuous labour, personally superintending the packing of the fish during the day and spending consecutive nights in checking tallies and in examining and revising invoices. On the arrival of the Company's steamer, he often never removed his clothes for forty-eight hours.

The efforts of the Company's servants could not at first be wholly agreeable to the old established firms or their agents, and a great deal of correspondence, slightly acrimonious on one side and with unvarying courtesy on the other, is extant. Several firms, such as Messrs. Hunt & Henley, are found complaining of the interference of the Company's men with parties of fishermen on the Labrador coast. A few years later (1859) the Company is complaining of unwarrantable proceedings adopted by the rival traders. In that year, not long before Governor Simpson's death, it was decided that the Esquimaux Bay district should be separated from the Montreal department, much to Chief Trader

[1] Chief Factor P. W. Bell.

Smith's satisfaction, for it gave him, what he had long been striving for, a freer hand within his own territory. It soon came to be recognized that, as the price of fresh Labrador salmon in the London market was too low, it was better to sell the fish to local merchants or find a market for it in Montreal. Mr. Smith also called the Company's attention to the large profits which might accrue from a new enterprise — the packing of fresh salmon in tins — and this was soon inaugurated and lasted at Eagle River until the competition of the British Columbia salmon packing came to render it unprofitable.

There were other matters requiring great tact and prudence in the management, such as the demand of the North-West River Indians for the ministrations of a Roman Catholic missionary. Sir George Simpson, whose policy had always been to favour these missionaries, addressed a letter to the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Quebec on the subject, which drew forth a remonstrance from the Anglican Bishop Field of Newfoundland, and could hardly be agreeable to the Moravian missionaries of Labrador. It had to be considered what effect the Roman chapel proposed would have on the Company's relations with two such influential bodies. For it must be borne in mind that the Moravians were traders as well as priests and a bitter competition was to be avoided.

A century and a half ago the Esquimaux of the coast of Labrador were all heathen, who worshipped Torngak, an old man, as they supposed, who ruled the sea and its inhabitants, and Supperuksoak, the

goddess of the land. The *angekoks*, or sorcerers, held the people completely in superstitious bondage. Permission was readily granted by the British Government to the Moravian Brethren, in 1769, to found a mission among these heathen.[1] In the year 1770, Jens Haven came to Labrador, and took possession of the land which had been granted by the Crown to the Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel, for the purposes of the mission. In the year following, Nain was begun, and Hopedale in 1782. Hebron was begun in 1830.

In 1856, Mr. Smith, deciding upon the policy of being on the most friendly terms with the Moravian missionaries, wrote to the Brother Superior, suggesting that facilities would be given them to establish a mission on the shores of Esquimaux Bay. In the annual report for the following year, it is stated: —

In pursuance of the invitation given by Mr. Donald Smith, Brother Elsner left Hopedale in April, 1857, and journeyed to North-West River to discuss with him the advisability of starting a mission either there or at Rigolet. After a hard journey of five days he reached Mr. Smith's comfortable and hospitable dwelling. He was delighted with the country and the appearance of the settlement. Mr. Smith had four head of cattle, besides sheep, goats, and fowls; there was milk in plenty, and for the first time in Labrador, he tasted fresh roast beef, mutton, and pork.

[1] Previous to this date several exploratory journeys had been made to this coast. A missionary named Ehrhardt was murdered, together with five sailors, by the savages in a bay to the south of Hopedale, in 1752.

Mr. Smith's proposal was an enticing one. Although not fully authorized by the Hudson's Bay Company, he suggested that they would build a church and dwelling-house and pay a missionary one hundred pounds a year, which would have been wealth to the Moravians, whose yearly stipend was twenty-two pounds.

There were very few settlers in the neighbourhood and the Indians who visited the post preferred the Roman Catholic religion. Brother Elsner reported that "they were very fond of rum, and got it only in small quantities as presents, the sale of spirits being prohibited by law." On Sunday, Mr. Smith read service to his household, which was attended by about thirty Indians, although they could not understand a word of what was being said. For a Hudson's Bay Company factor has to be physician, parson, and judge amongst his people, as well as fur and fish buyer and shopkeeper. We have a picture of him reading the service on Sunday morning at the agent's house in a letter of a young clerk, written in 1859: —

To-day we all assembled for prayers in Mrs. Smith's parlour — every mother's son scrubbed and brushed up to the *n*th — even old Sam, who looked positively saint-like with a far-away expression, although he was probably only counting the flies which were buzzing on the window pane. Our Bourgeois read very impressively, Corinthians I, chapters 11 and 12. We sang three hymns, I coming out particularly strong in the Doxology.

The constant prevalence of disease due to ill diet, indulgence in liquor, and exposure, as well as accidents which too frequently were the result of carelessness, made it necessary for a factor to know the rudiments of medicine and surgery.

Amongst Mr. Smith's valuable possessions were two well-marked and well-thumbed volumes, Edwards's *Family Medicine*, and a *Materia Medica*. Some forty years later, addressing a body of London medical students, he related to them some of his own discoveries in the treatment of surgical cases in Labrador.

It may interest you to know that what may be termed a primitive and somewhat rude form of antiseptic treatment was practised in Canada some years before Lord Lister introduced his great discovery. For the treatment of wounds, ulcerated sores, etc., a pulp was made by boiling the inner bark of the juniper tree. The liquor which resulted was used for washing and treating the wounds, and the bark, beaten into a plastic, pliable mass, was applied after the thorough cleansing of the wound, forming a soft cushion lending itself to every inequality of the sore. Scrupulous cleanliness was observed, and fresh material used for every application. It will, I think, be admitted that this is essentially the basis of the antiseptic treatment which is now so important, and with which the name of Lord Lister will be ever honourably associated.

Perhaps I may be permitted to relate to you another little interesting experience which came to my notice. On the Labrador coast thirty or forty years ago there was a serious outbreak of scarlet fever, accompanied by diphtheria. Many of the people died,

both children and adults, and the survivors were so alarmed by the spread of the disease and its fatal results, and were in such an abject state of fear, that they kept away from the houses in which people were known to be suffering. There is little doubt in my mind that many of the persons died from simple dread of the disease and the fright occasioned by the mortality. An officer of the Hudson's Bay Company visiting the settlement found this state of things existing. It was reported to him that a family of a former employee of the Company — a Scotchman — had taken the disease at a place some twelve miles distant. The official went there and found the whole family confined in a small hut. The different members of the family were scattered over the floor, and, in fact, in any place where room could be found. The door was shut and so were the windows, and the odour that came when the door was opened can best be left to the imagination. One of the family, a boy, had died, and was lying in an outhouse. The first thing he did was to break the window, and let in the air, and then to administer some remedies. All the other members of the family recovered, and the utter helplessness and abject terror which had previously prevailed among the inhabitants were at once changed into a feeling of hope. They saw that death was not inevitable and happily, although the disease still lingered on for some time, not a fatal case was subsequently recorded. I merely mention this to show the moral effect, the return of confidence which resulted from the death record having been temporarily stopped by the exercise of a little common sense.

Another curious incident comes to my recollection. A resident in the country returned to England

in consequence of a severe illness. He consulted the best medical men, and his case was diagnosed as one of Bright's disease. He was told that he could not last more than a few months, and made up his mind to return to Labrador and end his days; but the unexpected happened and he lived for many years afterwards. Some of the natives, knowing of his complaint, or, at any rate, of the symptoms, advised him to prepare a decoction from the juniper shrub and to drink nothing else for several months. In despair he did what was suggested, and after some time appeared to be perfectly cured. It is not claimed, of course, that the recovery was due alone to the efficacy of the remedy.[1]

One of the constant studies of Mr. Smith, both as Chief Trader and Chief Factor in Labrador, was how to utilize the neglected resources of the country and to take full advantage of its available products. I find him constantly calling attention in his letters to the neglect of Labrador's minerals and suggesting that a competent mineralogist be sent out to examine into their commercial character. "The beautiful quartz called Labradorite is abundant and ought easily to find a market amongst jewellers in Europe," he writes. He refers to the wild sarsaparilla, "of which," according to Mr. Isbister, "England imports from Russia and Honduras 180,000 pounds annually." There are frequent allusions to the commercial possibilities of the Labrador tea-plant, which under the name of *Weesuckapucka* had been formerly imported by the Company until the East India Com-

[1] Address at Middlesex Hospital, October 7, 1897.

pany protested that it was an infringement of their monopoly. Why were not Labrador cranberries in demand, when tens of thousands of gallons were imported from the Tsar's dominions?

Again, the waste of fish and fish offal on the coast greatly concerned him; and as early as 1855 he is discussing plans for the manufacture of fish manure as a valuable substitute for guano in the British and American markets. In a report on this subject he points out that the total annual product of the North American cod-fisheries was then estimated to be one and a half million tons of fresh fish. "Not less than one half of this is refuse thrown back into the sea, or left on the shore to decay, and yet capable of yielding 150,000 tons of a valuable manure, almost half that annually produced by Peru. Very few economists understand the value of the fisheries. They are always thinking in terms of wheat or cattle. The waste of fish on this coast is enormous and is only comparable to the waste of buffalo in the Far West. Every ton of fish is equal to at least three head of cattle or fifteen sheep, and Labrador yields millions of quintals [hundredweights] annually. This fishery alone could feed the whole of the Irish population."

Mr. Smith was on cordial terms with all the trappers, traders and "planters" on the coast, one of the chief amongst these being Mr. Nathan Norman, who was for many years in charge of the large fishing establishment at Indian Harbour, and with whom he carried on a considerable correspondence.

Another frequent correspondent was the late

Robert H. Prowse, for many years the Agent at St. Johns, Newfoundland. On one occasion he was a guest under his friend's roof. "He was a quiet, low-spoken man, and one thing that very much amused Mr. Prowse in after years was that he consulted him in relation to the investment of his savings. Prowse used to refer to this with great glee."[1]

But Donald Smith had long since begun to invest his savings judiciously. In the very year of his arrival in Labrador he had accumulated over £300, the bulk of which he invested in stock of the Bank of Montreal, thus beginning his connection with that institution of which he was destined to become the head.

Frequently Mr. Smith in his early days visited old residents on the coast, some of them Englishmen who had drifted hither by some extraordinary caprice of fortune. One of these was John Williams, a Londoner by birth, who had found a charm in the wilderness for forty-one years. Nearly all the settlers were Englishmen or Newfoundlanders, who originally visited the coast as fishermen or as servants of the fur and trading companies. He had married a plump Esquimaux damsel, and years later a visitor to Williams's cottage describes this Esquimaux matron greeting him with an *Oskshi-ni* (good-morning), and then resuming her vigils over a decoction of spruce which was being metamorphosed into beer. "Candles of reindeer tallow and

[1] Letter from Arthur Mews, Deputy Colonial Secretary of Newfoundland.

lamps of sputtering seal-oil emitted a feeble light, barely visible through the smoke of their burning, yet revealing sealskins pendant from the rafters, *komatiks* stowed overhead, and snowshoes, guns, and fishing-gear hanging from pegs driven into the walls. She, the help-meet, is so in the strictest sense of the word. She cures the codfish for market, and for family consumption, manufactures sealskin boots and garments, tends the salmon nets, 'sculps' the seals, and prepares the oil for burning, feeds the dogs, etc., besides performing her domestic and maternal duties. When driven by household cares, little vexations often occur to ruffle her temper, and then her shrill voice screams constantly as she works: '*Webuck-tam dog-ouk, ouk* — clear out, I tell you! Susan! Wat be doon? Where's the dishcloth? No, that beant he, blockhead. Mercy, who ever saw the flies and nippers so bad as they! You there, shet that door — shet it. Hist! abide still, child — knock off, I tell ye, or I'll fix that bawling. *Peruik!* Now who 's had finger in that pot! Oh, my!' " [1]

Another individual on the Labrador coast, with whom Mr. Smith was on intimate terms, was Henry Lodge. He was one of the several intelligent and educated men living upon that coast, who were impelled thither either from pure love of adventure or from misadventure in love. Of his family in England it was said in 1860 that "one brother is now a manufacturer at Bristol; another is a colonel in Her Majesty's service at the Cape of

[1] Charles Hallock, *supra*.

Good Hope, and a brother-in-law was librarian to the Prince of Wales." Reverses came, and he strode forth from the uncongenial atmosphere of civilization and turned his face to Labrador, and for forty-two years he devoted himself to cod and seal fishing, not once visiting his native land. In May, 1860, he died, at the age of seventy-seven years.

All settlers in Labrador, as distinguished from the visiting fishermen, are styled "planters." With this folk the short summer is a busy season, the cod, salmon, and seal fisheries demanding their constant attention. At its close they make up their accounts with the traders, and upon the approach of winter retire to the interior, where the timber affords them fuel and a shelter. Generally their nets and gear are rented for the season. As a rule the amount of fish caught does not pay for the advances of provisions and clothing, so they get deeper in debt year by year. At the close of the fishery they return to their houses on the inlet, stopping on the way at the Hudson's Bay posts, where they receive other advances of provisions and clothing to be charged against their coming winter's fur hunt. Arriving at home, they dig their potatoes and catch and freeze trout, which swarm in the mouths of all the streams at this season. As soon as sufficient snow falls, they set their traps for marten, fox, otter, lynx, and other fur-bearing animals. Each hunter has a "path" or line of traps fifty miles or more in length. A single winter visit to all the traps on the line may involve a week's

journey. Small "shacks" or shelters, where the hunters may pass the night, are built at convenient distances along the path. If they engaged in the salmon fishery alone, half the fish they caught were turned in to the Company as rent for the nets and the use of the "posts," which were and are still situated at the most favourable points.

The Company had a number of boarded huts for the fishermen in their employ, of such narrow dimensions (*res angusta domi!*) as to afford sleeping accommodation only for persons of normal length. On one occasion a very honest and active man presented himself to Chief Factor Smith for a bunk in one of these huts. The difficulty was that he was six feet six inches in length, — nearly a foot longer than the bunk. On an inspection of his quarters he rejected Mr. Smith's offer summarily, declaring that he was not going to be cramped for any agent or planter living, and neither was he content to be sawn in two.

"Will a bed seven feet long suit you?" asked the Chief Factor.

The fisherman said it would. Thereupon Mr. Smith sent for the Company's carpenter, a hole was cut in the wall of the building, to which a box lined with deerskin was applied outside and rendered stable by props. The man afterwards told Mr. Smith it was the first thoroughly comfortable and sensible bunk he had occupied in years. The receptacle was afterwards exhibited at the store at Rigolet and enjoyed much local fame as "Bill Sadler's leg box."

Naturally salmon was the staple food along the inlet during the salmon-fishing season, but even this most delicate fish was apt to pall ere long, and grateful enough were the planters for a change — even though it were to cod or herring, fresh or salt, not to mention trout and smaller fish. It is interesting to note that the Company's regular labourers, who were fed on fish for most of the year, were really in better condition than the meat-fed *voyageurs* of the interior.

Lord Strathcona once said, speaking of the relative value of a meat and a fish diet: "In respect to health and sustaining powers, a very general belief prevails, I think, that meat is the more nutritious and strengthening of the two. But this was not borne out in the experience of the Company. In former years in certain districts the food of the employees was almost solely the flesh of the buffalo, deer, etc. In others it consisted mainly of fish. Opportunity was offered for testing the merits of the different food each spring, when the brigade of boats were on the way out with their furs. In these circumstances there were naturally trials of strength in rowing, and in the result the fish-eating crews invariably had the advantage, especially in long-sustained efforts."

One of the most notable characters at Rigolet and North-West River was old Joe Goudy, who had been in the Company's service since 1818, and had served in at least a dozen factories between Labrador and Red River Settlement. He was fond of relating his adventures in the journey he had made

from Red River to North-West River, on snowshoes, twenty-five hundred miles, when he had camped in the open air with no other covering but the black vault of heaven. Old Goudy became very much attached to Mr. Smith, who learned from him many intimate facts and stories concerning the Far Western country, which long lingered in his memory.

Another old servant at North-West River was an Orkneyman, Henry Hay, who had accompanied the redoubtable John McLean in his overland journey from Ungava ten years before.

Still another of Donald Smith's friends was the Nascopie chief, Otelne, who for many years had come down with his companions to trade at North-West River. One season Otelne failed to come, and it was learned that he had taken it into his head to journey southward to the post at Seven Islands, where Chief Factor James Anderson, one of Mr. Smith's correspondents in the Far West whose acquaintance he had made in 1839 in Montreal, had recently been appointed. But the climate of the Gulf did not agree with Otelne and his people; many fell sick and died, and the next year all were encamped as usual near North-West River.

Still another friend of the Chief Trader and his family is referred to in the following characteristic letter which I am privileged to give, addressed by Mrs. Donald Smith to her mother, then at Lachine. It also affords a little glimpse of her life at the "fort": —

North-West River, Labrador,
28th June, 1856.

My dearest Mamma, —

We are having the most delightful weather imaginable — apart from flies and mosquitoes. Mr. Smith, who has gone down to Indian Harbour, myself, and the children are all well.

About a fortnight ago little Maggie, who had been behaving herself up till then, gave us a great fright by breaking out all over in a rash — but it went away, I am thankful to say, in a couple of days and she is now as well as possible. I spend a great deal of my time in the garden, where we have sown all the English seeds as well as all Maria's Orkney ones. We hope with care to have a fine show of flowers this year.

This post has been unusually busy this spring and also every one in the Bay. I think of you often, dearest Mamma, and wonder if you like the change. I sincerely trust you do. I hope Papa is still in good health and not suffering too much from his poor knee. Give him my fond love.

Maria tells me she has written and sent you all the patterns you asked for.

Your old friend Samluk came down the other day and nearly cried when he heard you had gone. "Miss Harsty no come back? Miss Harsty no come back?" I am told he will carry to the coast Yankees next season — that is, if he does not die of a broken heart.

All here send kindest remembrances and the children kisses.

Ever your loving daughter,

Bella.

From North-West River during the many years that he spent there Mr. Smith despatched many

letters, not only to his parents and his family, but to his fellow officers in the service, such as Messrs. Swanston, Barnston, Clouston, Hamilton, Mactavish, Cuthbert Cumming, and his brothers-in-law, the Hardistys. As has been mentioned, there were no fewer than six of these latter in the service, namely, William Lawson,[1] Richard, Thomas, Henry, George, and Joseph, two of them, at least, men of exceptional ability. Richard reached the rank of Inspecting Chief Factor and died, in 1902, a Senator of the Dominion. As to William, I find a passage in a letter written by Chief Trader James Anderson, November, 1853, to Sir George Simpson, in which the former says: —

I cannot sufficiently commend the zeal and disinterestedness displayed by Mr. Hardisty as well as the way in which he has conducted the affairs of the Yukon.

And again, two years later, under date of 29th November, 1855, to Mr. Eden Colville, from Fort Simpson: —

I took the liberty of recommending Messrs. W. Hardisty and B. R. Ross to your notice as valuable well-educated officers, worthy of promotion. They are so much out of the way they are almost unknown. The former is of fourteen years' standing.

Besides his letters to the above-named, there were numerous occasional correspondents scattered over

[1] His daughter became the wife of the present Senator Lougheed, of Calgary.

the country. It is unfortunate that so few of these letters have been preserved, for, read in the light of after events, they would possess signal interest, as may be judged by the following, which was addressed to William Kernaghan, a gentleman who had spent some weeks in Labrador and had been Mr. Smith's guest at North-West River a few years previously: —

North-West River Post, Labrador,
18th January, 1857.

My dear Mr. Kernaghan: —

I am very much obliged to you for your letter of the 3d of April last and was very glad indeed to hear from you again, and to learn that all was prospering with you. I have thought a great deal about your flattering proposal and you may depend upon it that if my prospects (or you would say lack of prospects) here induce me to retire from the service of the Honourable Company, I will not fail to write and let you know. It is possible that circumstances connected with the Company itself may make early consideration of such a step on my part necessary.

I doubt very much now whether I shall ever be transferred to the West, but much depends upon what happens in this department in the course of the next few outfits.

Your account of the city of Chicago and the opportunities it offers interests me extremely, and I have no doubt that one might make rapid headway there in commercial enterprises, such as shipping, which makes me regret all the more that this magical land of yours is not within the borders of the Queen's dominions.

I myself am becoming convinced that before many decades are passed the world will see a great change

in the country north of Lake Superior and in the Red River country when the Company's license expires or its charter is modified. Thousands of settlers are pressing forward into the Michigan Territory, where land, I gather, is not vastly better than that on the British side of the boundary. You will understand that I as a Labrador man cannot be expected to sympathize altogether with the prejudices against immigrants and railways entertained by many of the Western commissioned officers. At all events, it is probable that settlement of the country from Fort William westward to the Red River, even a considerable distance beyond, will eventually take place and with damaging effect on the fur-trade generally. Governor Simpson himself took a very favourable view of the character of the country for settlement.

I shall prudently keep my opinion until it is asked for; I do not believe those in authority in London or elsewhere are well advised in thus shutting off the country and aspersing its character and that a Chicago is just as possible there as in Illinois.

Even in Labrador, "bleak" and "desolate" as it is, or reputed to be, my little farm here continues to flourish, and I have managed with care to grow some things which would surprise you, and this year I intend to make some new trials under glass.

Whenever you can spare the time, I shall be glad to hear from you, and if you can interest any of your geological friends to explore this district you may depend upon me to give them a cordial welcome. Unless I resign from the service or am transferred, it will be some years before a furlough will enable me to enjoy the privilege of Western travel; but when that time comes, we shall meet if we both survive, and I will

claim your kind counsel as to where I can deposit my little talent to most advantage.

With kind regards, in which my wife unites, believe me to be, my dear Mr. Kernaghan,

Most truly yours,

Don. A. Smith.

Together with the rest of the world, Mr. Smith derived his idea of Sir George Simpson's opinions from the work which the late Governor published under his own name in 1843. There, referring to the Rainy River country, occurs the following significant passage: —

> Nor are the banks less favourable for agriculture than the waters themselves to navigation, resembling in some measure those of the Thames near Richmond. . . . Is it too much for the eye of philanthropy to discern, through the vista of time, this noble stream, connecting as it does the fertile shores of two spacious lakes, with crowded steamboats on its bosom and populous towns on its borders?

Less than fifteen years later Simpson repudiated this language before a Parliamentary Committee appointed to consider the affairs of the Hudson's Bay Company. Naturally, the proceedings of this body excited the liveliest interest throughout the Company's service, and by none of the commissioned officers was the testimony of the various witnesses, including that of Governor Simpson, read with greater attention and perhaps astonishment than by the Company's chief representative in Labrador.

Committee of 1857

Writing on the 4th of November, 1857, Chief Trader Hamilton observes to Mr. Smith: —

The report of the Committee which has been sitting on our affairs in London since February is out. A copy will reach you in due course from Leadenhall Street (if they think we can be safely trusted with one), but meantime I hasten to forward you the gist of their finding and recommendations. Briefly, then, they are of opinion that "whatever may be the validity or otherwise of the rights claimed by the Hudson's Bay Company, under the Charter, it is desirable that they should continue to enjoy the privilege of exclusive trade, which they now possess, except so far as those privileges are limited by our recommendations."

These recommendations, briefly, are that the Red River and Saskatchewan districts come as soon as may be under the control and jurisdiction of Canada. If Canada does not immediately wish to annex, temporary administration should be undertaken.

In arriving at this decision, three considerations are mentioned.

1. The great importance to the more peopled portions of British North America that law and order should be maintained.

2. The fatal effects which they believe would infallibly result to the Indian population from a system of open competition in the fur-trade and the consequent introduction of spirits in a far greater degree than at present.

3. The probability of the indiscriminate destruction of the more valuable fur-bearing animals in the course of a few years.

The Committee shirk altogether the question of chartered rights. How far these rights may prove an

obstacle to the attainment of the objects aimed at, they refuse to say, and speak of amicable adjustment by the British and Canadian Governments and the Company. They "indulge the confident hope that the Government will be enabled next session to present a bill which shall lay the foundation of an equitable and satisfactory arrangement in the probable event of legislation being found necessary."

How the Governor and Honourable Committee takes all this, I have not yet learnt; but I dare say they regard it as temporary victory.

Another correspondent, Chief Trader McMurray writes: —

It has certainly been a most spirited, not to say violent attack on the Company, and yet it has been conducted with so much decorum that the temper of none of the witnesses was very considerably ruffled. I do not apprehend, however, that we have seen the last of it, at least so far as the Red River malcontents are concerned.

Canada would appear to be in deadly earnest with regard to the railroad, and my own opinion is that Sir George Simpson will not set any very formidable obstacles in the path of the promoters of the scheme. Personally, I do not believe it to be as fantastic as many in the service hold.

You will be interested to know that Sir George was put upon the rack for days at a time, and on the whole came out with flying colours. It was extremely awkward that Mr. Roebuck and the others should confront him with passages from his own book concerning the fertility of the country and the practicability of a North-westerly route, which he was obliged with

changed opinions to disavow. McLaughlin writes that this caused a good deal of amusement in Committee, but Sir George stuck to his guns. He was particularly interested in all that passed with regard to cultivation. They even brought up a statement of old Sir Alexander Mackenzie's that he saw in the Elk River a kitchen garden "as fine as any in the world."

I thought Sir George was a little hard on his cousin, Thomas Simpson. He kept telling the Committee that he did not conceive that his judgment was sound on many points, that his judgment was "placed higher than it should be," etc.

You remember Kernaghan. He also appeared before the Committee, but luckily he did not volunteer any evidence concerning his residence in this part of the world. After detailing a great deal of inaccurate information about Vancouver Island, etc., he was asked if there was any other part of the North American territory that he was personally acquainted with. He said he had been in Labrador. "How long were you in Labrador?" If McLaughlin expected to have any further addition to his set of scandals he must have been disappointed, for Kernaghan's reply was, "Not very long." Ellice leaned forward, as if with the intention of ascertaining the precise period of Kernaghan's sojourn, but evidently thought better of it and Kernaghan was spared.

But after all the *fons et origo* of this present agitation was Isbister, and his examination was a most lengthy one. He was asked about his property in the Red River Settlement, which consists of a farm at present worked by his uncle, P. Kennedy. He told the Committee that he had raised corn as far north as Fort Norman, on Mackenzie River, near the Arctic

Circle. He had also raised barley and potatoes there. That was the most northerly situation that the cultivation of wheat had ever been attempted. Barley was tried at Fort Good Hope, but failed. Potatoes were also more or less of a failure there, and he put the limit of the growth of potatoes at Fort Norman. "I hope you will not laugh at me as very visionary, but I hope to see the time, or that my children may live to see the time, when there is a railroad going across that country and ending at the Pacific; and so far as individual opinion goes, I entertain no doubt that the time will arrive when that will be accomplished. I state it is for the sake of Canada that permission should be reserved to her to that extent only, that if she makes a railroad through her own portion of this territory, it shall go through to the terminus. That is merely my opinion."

You have heard of McLaughlin's ridiculous proclamation to the Indians. It provoked shrieks of laughter in Committee, especially when McLaughlin confessed that it was in rather bad French. I send it to you in order that you may be entertained. Napoleon's production pales into insignificance beside this!

Did you see what Chief Justice Draper told the Committee? — that they might laugh at him as visionary, but he hoped to see the time or believed his children would live to see it, when there would be a railway going all across the country and ending at the Pacific. He said he entertained no doubts whatever of it. I am told that this fantasy occasioned much merriment, especially on the part of the "Old Bear," but I am equally convinced that it will come.

I am greatly obliged to you [writes Mr. Smith from

North-West River] for sending me McLaughlin's magniloquent proclamation which was probably written less for the "Métifs" than for the people of what he called "Grande Bretange" (!) McLaughlin's uncle did his best to get him into the service, but Sir George would have nothing to do with him, after their first interview. He went out to Red River, had a quarrel with Governor Christie, and did his best to stir up all the opposition he could, trading clandestinely with the Americans, Indians, and half-breeds.

Two or three years later there is a significant passage in a letter of Chief Trader Smith to Chief Trader Dugald Mactavish: —

Although destiny has sent me to the East, I have long corresponded with gentlemen stationed there [in the West], and I have read every book and report on the Western country. . . . Whatever the Committee in London does or does not do, I, for one, see that matters at Red River are slowly but surely coming to a head and have been long before Sir George departed. The Company can only maintain its hold and its monopoly there by altering its whole policy; for the malcontents are increasing constantly in force and are not to be repressed by having the Royal Charter constantly quoted to them. If Governor Johnson had three or four regiments of soldiers to do the Company's bidding, I have little doubt Kennedy and the rest would be overawed and compelled to betake themselves elsewhere. As it is, they will go on until there is a repetition of the old scenes of bloodshed and turbulence, until either Canada or the Imperial Government will be forced to interfere and abrogate the Charter.

Before the close of navigation in 1860, Mr. Smith had heard of the death of Sir George Simpson in the previous September. "The little Emperor's light has gone out, just after he basked in a final blaze of glory," wrote Dugald Mactavish and enclosed newspaper cuttings describing the Governor's reception at Lachine of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, during the latter's visit to Montreal. "The Governor has entertained many noblemen in his time," wrote another; "the advent of a live Heir Apparent was too great a shock at his time of life." Simpson was given a funeral of some pomp, amongst those who paid a final tribute to his memory being Chief Trader Richard Hardisty, Mr. Smith's father-in-law, then living at Lachine, but growing too infirm to take part in the cortège.[1]

Simpson had for forty years occupied a unique position in the fur-trade. The measure of his success may partly be gauged by the failure of his successors. The personal loyalty which was felt for him by an entire generation of officers blinded them to his defects of character, as it blinded them to the principle upon which his power and his policy were founded and operated. He was the accredited instrument of an English mercantile body, who were bent on retarding the development of a great country in order to keep it a fur-hunting preserve, and whose authority was derived, not from an obsolete charter, but from the exertions of a race of bold and adventurous Scotsmen who had themselves discovered, explored, and established posts in that

[1] Mr. Hardisty died in 1864 at Lachine.

country and who but for Simpson would have had as sovereign a right to their foothold as any other race of discoverers and pioneers. But this question of the "wintering partners" only became acute after Simpson's death.

After all (as Captain W. F. Butler [1] wrote to a Chief Factor of the Company), "a corporation has no conscience. From a tyrant or a despot you may hope to win justice; from a robber you may perchance receive kindness; but a corporation of London merchants represents to my mind more mercenary mendacity, and more cowardly contempt of truth and fair play, than can be found in the human race." The language is strong: but who, studying the later history of the Hudson's Bay Company, dare deny its truth? Of Simpson's great qualities I have already spoken. One trifling instance of his pettiness is revealed in the following letter: —

Paul Kane to Donald A. Smith

TORONTO, March 21st, 1861.

DEAR SIR: —

As I have long been most desirous of visiting Labrador for the purpose of making a series of drawings, depicting Indian and Esquimaux life in that peninsula, I venture to address you at the instance of our friend, Mr. R. Hamilton, to ascertain if you would accord me facilities for the accomplishment of my design.

I should mention that I made formal application on two occasions to the late Sir George Simpson, but as I had the misfortune to incur the Governor's displeasure, I understand that he had given orders that I was

[1] Afterwards Lieutenant-General and K.C.B.

not to be countenanced by any of the officers in the service.

You are probably informed of the occasion for this; but in any case, the ban has now been removed and I am most anxious to proceed with my original plan.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

PAUL KANE.

DONALD SMITH, ESQ.,
Chief Trader, Esquimaux Bay.

In a further letter, Kane says: —

I think it due to myself to state that the prime cause of my offending was that I had not furnished him [Simpson] copies of my Indian paintings, *gratis*, in recognition of his official protection; and secondly, that I had omitted to dedicate my recent book describing my wanderings to himself. I entertained great respect for Sir George Simpson, but I felt that he was in no sense my patron, and that such favour as I had received from Mr. Christie and others was in no way due to his example.

Kane was one of the earliest of our Canadian artists. He was a man of talent, but his renown is due more to his choice of subject than to his technical skill. His series of paintings, illustrative of Indian life and character, are the property of the Ontarian Government and are of great historical and ethnological value. Not the least interesting passages in his book are those which naïvely describe the petty obstacles placed in his path and the little humiliations he had to endure from the all-powerful Governor, Sir George Simpson.

Sir George Simpson's Death

Chief Trader D. A. Smith to the Company

19th July, 1861.

It was with deep grief I received intelligence of the death of Sir George Simpson, Governor Chief of Rupert's Land, and I feel convinced that every individual in this district connected with the service joins with me in lamenting the loss of one who had for so many years conducted the affairs of the Company with such consummate ability, and whom we had learnt to regard with the greatest of respect.

There is a rumor current among the natives that a Roman Catholic missionary is this summer to proceed from Seven Islands on the St. Lawrence to Fort Nascopie, and from thence is to accompany our people to North-West River, and I shall be glad if this should prove correct, as the Indians are still anxious to see a priest.

A great event at North-West River in 1860 was the arrival there of H.M.S. *Bulldog*, in command of Captain Leopold McClintock, R.N.

When in June of 1860 McClintock commissioned the *Bulldog* to carry out a survey for the promoters of the North Atlantic Telegraph Route, there was no telegraph between Europe and America. The cable laid in 1858 had broken down irremediably after twenty days' use and no attempt had been made to lay a second. To reduce the continuous length of the cable it was now proposed to lay it in four sections: Scotland to Faroe Islands; Faroe Islands to Iceland; Iceland to Greenland; and Greenland to Labrador. By this means a higher speed of signalling than was possible over a continuous cable of great length might be secured.

The Admiralty undertook to obtain the deep-sea soundings along the proposed route, but declined to undertake the survey of the coasts of the route or the responsibility of selecting the landing-places for the cable, as it was felt that here the real and probably insuperable difficulties of the scheme would be met. This part of the work was left to the promoters of the scheme, who promptly engaged the hero of the Franklin Relief Expedition, then recently knighted and out of active employment, to undertake it.

Of this visit, Sir Clements Markham writes: —

On August 18th the line of soundings was commenced from Cape Farewell to Hamilton Inlet on the coast of Labrador. Fifteen soundings were taken, the greatest depth being 2032 fathoms. The decrease in depth, on approaching the Labrador coast, was from 1190 to 280 in eight miles, or 700 feet per mile. Hamilton Inlet penetrates far into the land. The *Bulldog* went up it for a distance of 115 miles to North-West River at its head, where there is a station of the Hudson's Bay Company. Mr. Donald Smith, who represented the Company, had lived there for twelve years, cultivating some of the land with vegetables, root crops, and barley, and collecting wild grasses from the swamps for hay. He had a horse, half a dozen cows, goats, and poultry. There are very stunted firs growing wild, and a variety of berries; such as cloudberries, whortleberries, crowberries, cranberries, raspberries, bilberries, and stone bramble. Mr. Donald Smith furnished most valuable information and saw no difficulties in landing a cable. A lasting friendship was formed between McClintock and Mr. Donald Smith.

McClintock's Visit

A memorandum furnished by the famous sailor gives us a pleasant glimpse into the home circle at North-West River.

Chief Factor [Trader] Donald A. Smith as I saw him on the 26th August, 1860, was about forty years old, some five feet ten inches high, with long sandy hair, a bushy red beard, and very thick red eyebrows. He was dressed in a black swallowtail coat, not at all according to the fashion of the country, and wore a white linen shirt. Although the Factor's countenance could hardly be called handsome, it was distinguished, and his manners were irreproachable. His talk showed him to be a man of superior intelligence. He bade us enter the parlour, and after chatting a few moments on the weather and our trip up the river, he introduced us to his wife and two children. Mrs. Smith is a small, intelligent, rather attractive lady, who evinced the greatest curiosity concerning people and events in England and the States, the war, the fashions, and our own personal histories.

We noted that the room was very well, even tastefully, furnished. There were several pictures on the wall, prominent amongst them a large engraving of the coronation of Queen Victoria.

"I just missed that event," observed Mr. Smith; "for I was obliged to sail for Canada a few weeks before."

We all went out to see the celebrated garden, which was quite ablaze with flowers, most of which, said our host, "they told me could not possibly grow in Labrador. I," he added, "thought differently. Some, you see, I have had to put under glass, but the most of the ordinary things grow very well, if they are well watered and manured. We have fresh milk, cream, and butter

and eggs from our poultry. Labrador is not such a bad place."

While Mrs. Smith went indoors to superintend dinner, the Factor conducted us over the farm.

"I had great difficulty at first," explained Mr. Smith, "in prevailing on the labourers to plough and dig. Few of them had done any farming, and hardly any of them had ever seen anything growing that required any cultivation. Now each plants his own patch of root crops and it is quite surprising what a difference it has made. We have even turned to and built a good bit of a very fair road, as you see."

"I see, Mr. Smith," said I, "you're not a man to be content with conditions as you find them in this world."

"Who would be?" returned the Factor, smiling. "Who would be? The world would be a very sad place if we could n't make it a little better."

In the evening after dinner Mr. Donald Smith gave us a most enjoyable description of the country, showing a most intimate knowledge of the geology, its fauna and flora, and the native population. For a man situated off the beaten track as he is, he displayed a surprising familiarity with current events. He showed me a great heap of newspapers. I laughed and told him that when the cable came he could stop his subscriptions.

Admiral Sir Leopold McClintock to Sir Donald A. Smith

29 Kensington, London, W.
[June 25, 1886.]

My dear Sir Donald Smith: —

Few of your friends can have greater satisfaction than myself at seeing your name in the Honours List,

as I do this morning. It is now more than a quarter of a century since I landed from the *Bulldog* and shook hands with you at North-West River, Labrador, and I shall never forget my astonishment at the things I saw there and the impression your achievements (especially in the agricultural line) made upon me and my ship-mates. I remember saying then, "Labrador won't hold this man." At the same time I am convinced that if you had remained, that particular wilderness would have "blossomed as the rose."

. . . . . .

Believe me, my dear Sir Donald,

Very sincerely yours,

F. Leopold McClintock.

CHAPTER VI

REVISITS HIS NATIVE LAND

1862–65

FOUR and twenty years had elapsed, — years of hardship and incessant labour amidst surroundings whose bleakness and inclemency were only tempered by his own almost superhuman efforts, — when, in 1862, Donald Smith was notified that he had been appointed to a chief factorship in the Company. Henceforth, he would have two eighty-fifth shares instead of a single one in the profits of the fur-trade, a single share then producing about two hundred and fifty pounds sterling a year.

Never was promotion better earned. He had not spared himself in the Company's interest; he had converted the dwindling profits of Esquimaux Bay into an enterprise yielding large and steady returns. In sending him congratulations, somewhat belated, owing to the distance which separated them, Dr. John Rae[1] wrote, "The company has done itself honour in recognizing your services in Labrador. You are now in name, as you have been long in reality, the *chief factor* in the situation."

There were many others who congratulated him on his promotion, including the Company's new Secretary.

[1] The Arctic explorer.

Letter to Thomas Fraser

Donald A. Smith to Secretary Thomas Fraser

CARTWRIGHT, SANDWICH BAY,
17th June, 1862.

I most heartily thank you for your cordial congratulations on my promotion in the service for which, while conscious of having at least endeavoured to do my duty throughout, I am aware how much I am indebted to the good opinion and active efforts of yourself and other kind friends in the Hudson's Bay House, of whose favourable opinion I am more proud than of my increased emoluments. The heartiness and cordiality with which you assure me of your friendship, of the sincerity of which I have had such ample proof, makes me somewhat ashamed of myself, knowing how little I have had it in my power to do, to merit these sentiments. The parcel — it is really a bale — of newspapers you so kindly forwarded by "Escort" I have received. They, especially the *Couriers*, will afford much interesting reading during the long autumn and winter which succeed our few busy summer months. Be pleased to accept my best thanks for them.

I am glad to know that the dogs got home in safety, but regret to learn that the death of one of them was apprehended from distemper. This dread disease — it appears to be distemper and madness conjoined, for the poor animals become unquestionably rabid, while the symptoms are also those of distemper — unfortunately has again broken out among our dogs, upwards of a dozen of them having died since the beginning of June; but so far it has been confined to the pure Esquimaux breed and it is to be hoped may not extend to the others.

By Messrs. Hunt's new vessel, the *Spruce Bud*, which I am told will sail from Cartwright about the

10th to 15th September, and proceed direct to London, I shall send you four or five dogs, including the Newfoundland dog referred to in my letters of last year. This I hope will enable you to make good the loss of the other dog should he unluckily have died.

Your friend, Mr. Morrison, is, I presume, a brother-in-law of one or more of Mr. Grant's sons, three of whom were schoolfellows of mine for some four or five years. Their names were, I think, Patrick, Hugh, and James, or Jamie as we then called him.

Of the men sent out by the "Escort," one has been a soldier (the third now in the district) and another a plumber and gasfitter, neither of them trades much in request here. Bell and West being boatmen will answer well, and the others being young men will no doubt become useful. The poor man, S——, pensioner, who came out in 1860, has been a sad drag upon us ever since his arrival, but more especially within the past year as he has almost constantly been unfit even for the lightest duties, and I shall be glad to know how soon we can send him home.

You will see by my official letter of this date that Messrs. Hunt's people, whatever their professions, do not in reality take the best means of assisting us in our transport business. It is truly humiliating to have to dance attendance upon them in this way year after year and thus have our best efforts rendered of no avail.

Dr. Rae would have reached England in time for the opening of the great Exhibition, and I hear that James Anderson (a),[1] from Mingan, has also gone home to but have a look at it. I should also not be sorry to see

[1] There were two Chief Factors of this name, distinguished by (a) and (b).

it, but must e'en content myself with another year in Esquimaux Bay, and trust it may be more prosperous in its result than 1861, which, as regards furs, has indeed been very poor.

Since Governor Simpson's death, Mr. Smith had repeatedly urged that the establishment at Ungava Bay, abandoned since McLean's time, should be reopened. He pointed out that the Moravian Brethren had gradually got the whole of the Ungava trade into their hands. His recommendations were adopted.

Chief Factor D. A. Smith to Secretary Fraser

CARTWRIGHT, SANDWICH BAY,
22nd July, 1863.

My suggestions to the late Sir George Simpson with regard to the enlargement of the business of Esquimaux Bay district embraced the reoccupation of Fort Chimo, Ungava Bay, or, should this not be considered desirable, then the formation of a station in the interior of Fraser's River near to Nain, the former being, however, in my opinion, much preferable. During the past winter we prepared a quantity of logs, boards and other building materials which would be available for the repair or reërection of buildings at Fort Chimo. Even had I not heard from the Board on the subject, it was my intention this season to have brought it to their notice, feeling satisfied that, if we do not shortly make a move in that direction, others will do so, as I believe there are several on this coast who have for years past had an eye on that quarter, and amongst them Mr. N. Norman, who, I have been told, went so far as to engage one or more persons for

the trip. This I repeatedly urged upon the attention of Sir George Simpson, once or twice officially, but more generally under private cover, and he appeared to be fully alive to the importance of protecting the Company's interests by again occupying that place, hesitating only as to the comparative advantages of forwarding the supplies from Hudson's Bay [Whale River] or this district. To the former I was at first inclined to give the preference, thinking that it would less attract the attention of Mr. Norman and others in this quarter who might be inclined to follow us thither; but on more mature consideration I am now of opinion that it would be better it should be outfitted from and form a part of this district, believing that a divided charge would cause very great inconvenience owing to the propensity of the natives for wandering from one district to another, believing that by so doing they were relieved from the necessity of liquidating what on their return to either district had become old debts, the baneful effects of which I have too frequently seen while I was stationed at the King's Posts as well as in the relations between Mingan and Esquimaux Bay. I am of opinion that the business of Ungava should for some time at least be conducted on a more limited and consequently more economical scale than formerly, confining it in the first instance to Fort Chimo.

I would beg to bring to the notice of the Board a new branch of business, which, from the minute inquiries I have made, I feel convinced would be attended with considerable profit, and for carrying on which one of our stations in Esquimaux Bay is well adapted. I refer to preserving salmon fresh in tins. This business has been carried on by Messrs. Hunt & Henley for

several years back, and that it has been amply remunerative may be inferred from the fact that this season they have entered much more largely into it, intending to preserve not less than 50,000 pounds. But we are not left to conjecture on the subject, for their agent, Mr. Goodridge, who from some cause, possibly owing to some recent changes in the conduct of their business, is at present more than usually communicative, assures me it is by far the most profitable part of their business.

As to Newfoundland: with that Colony relations about the same time became strained, for a claim had been recently vigorously set up to the inclusion of Rigolet and North-West River within the boundaries of the Newfoundland Labrador. Mr. (afterwards Sir) James Winter, was despatched forthwith to collect revenue dues. "Resist the imposition by all legal means," wrote the Company to Chief Factor Smith. But it was seen to be an untenable position. "Personally, I do not consider this dodging the tax collector either prudent or dignified," wrote the Chief Factor to his friend, Mr. Prowse, of St. Johns. He was considerably relieved when he was advised that "part of the duties," at least, imposed by the Newfoundland Legislature must be paid — under protest.

Differences with Messrs. Hunt and Henley, especially in the conveyance of supplies, finally induced Mr. Smith to propose in 1864 that their trading and fishing establishments, together with their desk at Swift's Cove in Hamilton Inlet, should be bought by the Company, and this was accordingly

done. Furthermore, a vessel was purchased and manned by the Company to ply direct between London and the Labrador coast.

Although few had any inkling of the fact at the time, Donald Smith's well-merited appointment as Chief Factor proved to be amongst the very last made by the Company as reconstituted in 1821. For in the following year the concern underwent an entire change, the herald of a series of changes whose history should now be chronicled.

"You doubtless know," wrote a friend from London to Mr. Smith in 1862, "that negotiations are on foot for the purchase of the Company's rights in the North-West. I hear of several people being approached. Whether the purchase will be by Government or private enterprise remains to be seen. In any case, it looks as if you might say farewell to any chances of being transferred to the interior of Rupert's Land. Some say it will prove the end of the fur-trade, when the beaver will flee before the axe and the plough."

What was actually happening had been foreseen by many. It was a logical result of the disclosures made before the Parliamentary Commission of 1857 and the agitation of the disaffected Red River settlers, of the report of Professors Dawson and Hind and of the persistent agitation in Upper Canada.

Even had Sir George Simpson lived, it is doubtful if his opposition would have persisted. Shortly before his death, he had avowed to Sir John Macdonald a complete change of front with regard to the development of the North-West. He had con-

fessed his error and disavowed his former sophistries. No man knew better than Simpson that what he had written both publicly and privately in 1841 concerning the fertility and prospects of the country was true; that what he had said before the Commission in 1857 was false. But on this latter occasion, the local ruler had been overruled. In London, almost the entire Board, led by the aged Governor Berens, insisted that he should retract his own words, and, reluctantly enough, he had done so. He had stood loyally by both the powerful Ellices, father and son, and the majority of the shareholders in deprecating the whole of Rupert's Land as a field for agricultural settlement.

Yet, Simpson realized clearly that it was vain for the Company much longer to oppose the inevitable. A transcontinental highway and telegraph system and the immigration of settlers into the North-West were as imminent as the rising and setting of the sun. This opinion of the Governor's could hardly be kept a secret (especially as he was a little ashamed of the figure he had cut before the Commission), and it soon began to be rumoured in the service. On his return to Canada, in the autumn of 1857, and for the next few years, we find, from the letters of the wintering partners among themselves, numerous indications that they were on the *qui vive* for developments which would vitally affect their interests. Up to Simpson's death in September, 1860, however, no suspicion was entertained that the Company would surrender to the progressive party, or should circumstances compel the

Board to do so, that their officers would not be consulted.

In spite of Simpson's lifelong efforts to make these officers forget the fact, nothing could be clearer than that the Hudson's Bay Company was lineally as much a British North American institution as it was English, and practically far more Canadian than English.

For forty years Simpson had effectually repressed coöperation among the wintering partners and stifled any real corporate expression on their part. At his death, however, the need for a leader and spokesman became evident. His successor, Mr. Alexander Grant Dallas, was virtually an outsider imposed upon the wintering partners by the London Board, whose successors have to this day continued the policy of appointing to the chief superintendence of their fur-trade interests individuals totally detached in their antecedents from any connection with the fur-trade and in their sympathies from the individuals operating it. It had been a magnificent success in the case of Simpson; but the times and conditions favoured him. Even Simpson could not have played the rôle much longer. A brief experience caused Dallas to throw up the task in disgust. It was too late for him to be ruled by a London board wholly ignorant of the conditions of the fur-trade.

We have already seen how strong a feeling existed in Canada that the whole of the North-West Territory should be released from the bondage of the Company, that a boundary for Canada should

be on the Pacific Ocean. No charter could give a body of men control over half a continent.[1]

Efforts to test the validity of the Company's charter failed. In 1861, the Duke of Newcastle, then Colonial Secretary, entered into a copious and animated correspondence with the Company, and even drafted a measure whose principle was that the Crown be empowered to take from time to time such portions of the territory as might be required for colonization purposes, for which the Company was to receive compensation from the Imperial Government. No satisfactory agreement could be arrived at and the bill never reached Parliament. Nevertheless, the demand for the road and telegraph line to be constructed through the Company's territory in order to unite Canada and British Columbia and open up the fertile tract to settlers, became every day more popular as knowledge of the country was disseminated by travellers, engineers, and surveyors.

On the 15th of April, 1862, the Canadian Government wrote to Governor Dallas, then in Montreal, expressing its urgent desire to come to terms with the Company and construct such a road as was proposed by Mr. Sandford Fleming and others, through the Company's territory. In his reply, Dallas made it clear that partial concession of such land as must necessarily be alienated "would necessarily lead to the extinction of the Company." He added, however, that, although without in-

[1] Speech of Hon. Mr. Van Koughnet, President of the Executive Council of Canada, 1856.

struction from the Board of Directors in London for his guidance, he believed he was safe in stating his conviction that the Company "would be willing to meet the wishes of the country at large by consenting to an equitable arrangement for the surrender of all the rights conveyed by the charter."

Transactions, which were then veiled in mystery, are now sufficiently known. Amongst the first Englishmen to seek practical advantage from the new situation was Mr. (afterwards Sir) Edward Watkin, a shrewd railway financier and one of the promoters of the Grand Trunk Railway of Canada. So extravagantly sanguine was Watkin's nature that he wished to push the Grand Trunk Railway across the continent. More than fifty years later the dream was realized, but it was a "preposterous mirage" in 1862. Even he himself had to modify it. He would begin, he explained, by a transcontinental road and telegraph line and a steamer traversing Lake Superior. Collecting all the data on the subject, he waited upon the Duke of Newcastle, then Colonial Secretary, with a view to obtaining Imperial consent and coöperation. Naturally, the Hudson's Bay Company blocked the way. Pressure, therefore, from the highest quarters must be brought to bear upon the Company. If the Directors could be induced to permit such a road and telegraph line to pass through the territory, and the Imperial Government would grant an adequate subsidy, Watkin promised to procure a syndicate of capitalists to carry out a great

imperial project. The Duke of Newcastle, whose promptitude was as marked as his historic ancestor's procrastination, and whose knowledge of North American geography was notably superior, arranged an interview with Governor Berens. The latter affected to regard the proposal as a bolt from the blue.

"What," he cried, "sequester our very tap-root! Take away the fertile lands where the buffaloes feed! Let in all kinds of people to squat and settle, and frighten away the fur-bearing animals they don't hunt and kill! Impossible! Destruction, extinction of our time-honoured industry! If those gentlemen are so patriotic, why don't they buy us out?"

To this outburst the Duke is said to have quietly replied, "What is your price?" Governor Berens, his challenge thus accepted, stated that the Company would be prepared to sell out to the British Government for about a million and a half sterling. Watkin had his reasons for wishing the British Government to figure among the purchasing parties. Acquisition of the Company, "lock, stock, and barrel," seemed the only way out of the difficulty. The Governor and Committee rather reluctantly made up their minds for a sale; for to withstand the project which Watkin and his fellow-promoters had so dearly at heart grew increasingly dangerous. Watkin ingeniously represented that, at the price named, there could be no risk of loss, because the fur-trade could be separated from the lands and privileges and after the purchase a new

joint-stock company could be organized to take over the trading-posts, the fleet of ships, the stock of goods, and the other assets, rights, and privileges affecting trade. Such a company, it was demonstrated would pay a rental (redeemable after a term of years if necessary) of three or three and a half per cent on £800,000, leaving only £700,000 as the money value of a territory larger than Russia in Europe. The new Company would raise additional capital of its own to modernize its business, to improve the means of intercourse between its posts, and to cheapen and expedite the transport to and fro of its merchandise. It was pointed out that a land company could be organized in England, Canada, and America, which, on a similar principle of redemption rental, might take over the lands, leaving a reserve probably of a fourth of the whole as the unpaid-for property of the Government, at the price of £700,000. "All the Government would have to do would be to lend £1,000,000 on the amplest security." [1]

But awkward conditions were a corollary of the scheme. In the first place the Hudson's Bay Territory must be erected into a Crown Colony like British Columbia, and governed on the responsibility of the Empire.[2] As to the cost of government, three suggestions were put forward. One was a moderate system of duties in and out of the territory, to be agreed upon between Canada and

[1] Sir Edward Watkin, *Memoirs.*

[2] As a name for the proposed Crown Colony, Hesperia was suggested.

British Columbia, on the one hand, and the United States of America, on the other. The second was to sell a portion of the territory to America for five million dollars, which sum it was ascertained beforehand could be obtained. The third suggestion was to open up portions of the fertile belt to colonization from the United States.

It is profoundly interesting to learn that in considering the second plan, the Duke declared he would not sell; he would exchange. Studying the map, "we put our fingers upon the Aroostook Wedge, in the State of Maine; upon a piece of territory at the head of Lake Superior, and upon islands between British Columbia and Vancouver's Island, which might be equivalent to rectification of the boundary on many portions westward along the 49th parallel of latitude."[1]

But the Duke of Newcastle's enthusiasm was tempered by prudence. "Were he a minister of Russia he would certainly agree to purchase the land from the Hudson's Bay Company." "It is," said he, "the right thing to do for many, for all reasons; but Ministers in Great Britain must subordinate their views to the Cabinet." It appeared that the permanent officials of the Colonial Office were in positive opposition to the scheme. Consequently the promoters of the Pacific transcontinental railway could hope for no direct pecuniary aid from the British Government. They must act for themselves.

[1] Sir Edward Watkin, *Memoirs*.

The Duke of Newcastle to Edward Watkin

Colonial Office, 14th August, 1862.

I am glad to tell you that since I received your letter of Saturday last, the Hudson's Bay Company has replied to my communication, and has promised to grant land to a company. . . . The question now is, what breadth of land they will give, for of course they propose to include the whole length of the line through their territory. A copy of the reply shall be sent to Mr. Baring, and I hope you and he will be able to bring this conception to some practical issue.

I was quite aware of the willingness of the Company to sell their whole rights for some such sum as £1,250,000. I ascertained the fact two months ago, and alluded to it in the House of Lords in my reply to a motion by Lord Donoughmore. I cannot, however, view the proposal in so favourable a light as you do. There would be no immediate or direct return to show for this large outlay, for of course the trade monopoly must cease, and the sale of the land would for some time bring in little or nothing — certainly not enough to pay for the government of the country.

I do not think Canada can, or, if she can, ought to take any large share in such a payment. Some of her politicians would no doubt support the proposal with views of their own, but it would be a serious, and for some time unremunerative, addition to their very embarrassing debt. I certainly should not like to sell any portion of the territory to the United States — exchange (if the territory were once acquired) would be a different thing, but that would not help towards the liquidation of the purchase money.

The Company Negotiates

After further correspondence, it was arranged that the promoters of the "Pacific Scheme," as it was called, should meet the Governor and Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company in an official interview. The date was the 1st of December, 1862.

"The room," writes Sir Edward Watkin in his *Memoirs*, "was the Court Room, dark, and dirty. A faded green cloth, old chairs, almost black, and a fine portrait of Prince Rupert. We met the Governor, (Berens,) Eden Colville, and Lyall only. On our part there were Mr. C. C. Glyn [the late Lord Wolverton] Captain Glyn [the late Admiral Henry Glyn], and Messrs. Newmarch, Benson, Blake, and myself. Mr. Berens, an old man and obstinate, bearing a name to be found in the earliest lists of the Hudson's Bay shareholders, was somewhat insulting in his manner. We took it patiently. He seemed to be astounded at our assurance."

But the Governor showed himself more reasonable; a calmer discussion ensued, and the promoters were informed that the Company would be ready to make a grant of land for the actual site of a road and telegraph line through their territory. Nothing more would be vouchsafed, unless, as they had previously stated, they were paid for all their rights and property.

"The offer," observes Sir Edward, "of a mere site of a road and ground for telegraph poles was of no use. So, just as we were leaving, I said, 'We are quite ready to consider your offer to sell; and to expedite matters, will you allow us to see your

accounts, charters, and so forth?' They promised to consult their Court."

Some weeks later the enterprising promoters were put into communication with "old Mr. Roberts, aged eighty-five, their accountant, and with their solicitor, Mr. Maynard." Many interviews took place between these parties. On the 17th of March, 1863, Mr. Watkin met the Governor, Mr. Ellice, junior (son of Edward Ellice, who had been nicknamed the "Old Bear"), Mr. Matheson, and Mr. Maynard at Hudson's Bay House. A number of account-books were produced and examined. But the balance-sheet was withheld.

On the following day, the chief promoter spent the forenoon with Mr. Roberts, the accountant, and his son and assistant, at Hudson's Bay House. Mr. Roberts told him many odd things, one of which was, that the Company had had a freehold farm, on the site of the present city of San Francisco, of one thousand acres, and had sold it just before the gold discoveries for £1000, because two factors had quarrelled over it. "I learnt a good deal of the inside of the affair, and got some glimpses of the competing North-West Company, amalgamated by Mr. Edward Ellice, its chief mover, many years ago, with the Hudson's Bay Company. Pointing to some boxes in his private room one day, Mr. Maynard said, '*There are years of Chancery in those boxes, if any one else had them.*'"

In spite of the Duke's grave state of health, he expressed the greatest interest in the progress of the negotiations. The prospect of Government

aid was, however, remote. Two ways were open to raise money for a purchase of the Company's rights — to secure the names and support of fifteen millionaires, for £100,000 each; the other to hand the proposed purchase over to the newly organized International Financial Society, who were eager to find some important enterprise to put before the public. The first method seemed to recommend itself to the promoters; and the friends of the project could easily have underwritten the necessary amount. But the Company now announced that it would give no credit. The purchasers must "take up the shares as presented and pay for them over the counter." There was, therefore, no alternative, and Mr. Richard Potter, acting for the capitalists, completed the negotiations. The shares were taken over and paid for by the International Financial Society, who issued new stock to the public to an amount which covered a large provision of new capital for the extension of business by the Company, and at great profit to themselves. As regards the new Hudson's Bay shareholders, their two hundred and one shares were subsequently reduced by returns of capital to one hundred and thirty-one. From being quoted on the Exchange at 37, twenty years later during the "land boom," the stock stood at 241!—and continued to advance.

Tidings of this stupendous transaction became noised abroad. As Chief Factor Smith long afterwards recalled, the morning that the Company's ship at Rigolet brought him a packet from England, and he drew forth a folded paper and read

the prospectus of the International Financial Society, Limited, "he trembled so that he could scarcely stand." As he said, many years later, "well could he understand old Governor Berens's feelings." According to the prospectus—

> The capital of the Hudson's Bay Company had been duly fixed at £2,000,000, of which amount the International Financial Society, Limited, have obtained and are prepared to offer to the public, £1,930,000.
>
> The subscribers will be entitled to an interest, corresponding to the amount of their subscription, in —
>
> 1. The Assets (exclusive of Nos. 2 and 3) of the Hudson's Bay Company, recently and specially valued by competent valuers at £1,023,500.
> 2. The Landed Territory of the Company, held under their Charter, and which extends over an estimated area of more than 1,400,000 square miles, or upwards of 890,000,000 acres.
> 3. A Cash Balance of £370,000.
>
> The present net income, available for dividends amongst Stockholders of the Company, secures a minimum interest exceeding 4 per cent on the above £2,000,000 Stock.

Thanks to a London friend, Chief Factor Smith was one of the earliest to learn the character and extent of the transaction in London. "It is a little unfortunate," he himself wrote to Mr. E. M. Hopkins, "that the Directors have not seen fit to take us into their confidence. I have no doubt that they intend to deal with the wintering partners justly and loyally, but in the mean time what steps have been taken to ascertain our opinion or to safe-

guard our interests?" Many of the Chief Factors and Chief Traders promptly addressed a memorial to the Company in London, requesting to be officially informed of the affair, which had been reported in the newspapers. Some of the bolder spirits counselled action of a determined nature. It was even predicted that a "general resignation of the officers from Labrador to Sitka would ensue, followed by a confederation among themselves in order to carry on the fur-trade in competition with the Company." At this juncture it only required one spirit more enterprising than the rest to have united the wintering partners in an action which would have been instant, far-reaching, and permanent in its effect.

Previously, at the beginning of 1863, when rumours of the *pourparlers* with the Duke of Newcastle were afloat, some of the older officers had taken alarm and demanded to be represented in London. Amongst these was one of Donald Smith's earliest friends, Chief Factor George Barnston, to whom and his associates, Secretary Thomas Fraser addressed the following letter: —

HUDSON'S BAY HOUSE, LONDON,
27th February, 1863.

The Governor and Committee are at a loss to conceive how the interests of the commissioned officers of the Company can be considered as unrepresented; and I am directed to express their surprise that such a statement should have emanated from gentlemen who have so long been connected with the service, and who ought to be satisfied, now as ever, that the Governor

and Committee consider themselves equally bound, to protect the interests of the fur-trade as those of the proprietors.

The Chief Factors and Traders, whether on the active or retired list, may rest assured that should any surrender of the charter be made, of which at present there is not the least probability, their interests will at least be as carefully protected by the Governor and Committee as they could be by any arrangements such as are shadowed forth in the memorandum.

In all the communications with the Colonial Office, in the evidence taken before the Committee of the House of Commons, and in any declaration made in either House of Parliament by any friends of the Company, it has been invariably stated that should the Company surrender their Chartered Rights, they would expect compensation for the officers and servants as well as for the proprietors.

When the sale of the Company to Mr. Watkin's syndicate was effected, Mr. Smith with the rest received the following from Governor Dallas: —

MONTREAL, 28th July, 1863.

To the Chief Factors and Chief Traders,

Hudson's Bay Company's Service.

GENTLEMEN: —

I have now official information from the Governor and Committee in England of changes of proprietorship of the Hudson's Bay Company stock recently made, and of the appointment of Sir Edmund Head, Bart., as the Governor of the Company in place of H. H. Berens, Esquire, resigned.

These changes have taken place in the ordinary manner of transfer from one proprietor to another,

and while the capital of the Company has been increased to some extent, no alteration has been made in the constitution or powers of the Company, which remain as heretofore, "The Company of Adventurers trading into Hudson's Bay."

It is proposed, however, gradually to extend, where practicable, the operations of the Company, while preserving as much as possible its original objects and character. At the same time, the position, rights, and duties of the gentlemen connected with the fur-trade will not be lost sight of in any new undertakings, not provided for in the existing Deed Poll.

I shall be glad to meet and consult with such of the officers as may be within reach, and to receive in writing the views of such others as may not have that opportunity, and who have suggestions to make.

My best efforts will be made to organize such measures as may be necessary to promote the general interest, and especially to protect your rights as they at present exist. How this can best be effected is now under serious consideration.

In the mean time, I have to assure you of the earnest desire of the new Governor and Committee to promote alike the efficiency and success of the Company and the personal well-being of all engaged in its widespread operations, confidently relying upon your hearty and cordial coöperation.

In return I have taken upon myself to assure the new Governor and Committee that he and they may rely upon our united efforts to secure the prosperity of the undertaking.

I have the honour to be, gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

A. G. Dallas.

As if to dissipate any lingering misgivings in the minds of the wintering partners, the new Governor himself wrote in this strain: —

From Sir Edmund Head

HUDSON'S BAY HOUSE, LONDON,
22nd July, 1863.

SIR: —

The change in the proprietary and in the governing body of the Hudson's Bay Company, which has recently taken place, may not unnaturally suggest doubts in the minds of the Commissioned Officers and servants of the Company with respect to the future course of trade, and their own position and prospects.

The Committee, therefore, think it right that I should inform you of their intention of carrying on the fur-trade, as it has been hitherto carried on, under the provisions of the Deed Poll, and their desire to extend their operations in this particular branch rather than to diminish it.

Whatever collateral objects of a different character the Company may, hereafter, have in view, it is not intended that these pursuits should interfere with the fur-trade, or that the gentlemen connected with the Company should necessarily take part in them, so as to have their interests affected by them. On the contrary, these interests will ever receive the most favourable consideration on the part of myself and Committee. We know the zeal and energy which has always characterized the service of the Company, and we are prepared at all times to do our utmost to secure the welfare and increase the comforts of the officers and servants.

I beg to invite you on my own part to free and un-

reserved communication, through the usual channel, with reference to the interests of the Company and its affairs. Any suggestions of yours in regard to the trade and its developments or the goods sent out by the Company will receive due consideration by the committee.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

EDMUND HEAD, *Governor.*

DONALD A. SMITH, Esq.
Chief Factor.

The first step in the reorganization of the Hudson's Bay Company's trade was to abolish or modify the Deed Poll of 1821. Under this instrument the wintering partners (both Chief Factors and Chief Traders) had certain vested rights which could not be interfered with without compensation. In 1863, the eighty-five shares of the wintering partners were apportioned as follows: —

15 Chief Factors	30 shares
37 Chief Traders	37 "
10 retired Chief Factors	13 "
10 retired Chief Traders	5 "
	85 "

"You will readily understand," wrote Chief Factor Smith to Governor Dallas, "that the officers of this district share to the full the apprehensions of the officers of the other departments, not the less so because our distance from the seat of Council renders it difficult if not impossible to conjoin with the others in taking measures to make our wishes known. Nevertheless, we have every

confidence that justice will be done to our interests."

Privately, in his letters to Messrs. Barnston, Swanston, and W. L. Hardisty, he was not free from misgivings. The Directors of the reconstructed Company were, as has just been intimated, the Right Honourable Sir Edmund Head, K.C.B. (lately Governor-General of Canada), Curtis Miranda Lampson, Eden Colville, George Lyall, Daniel Meinertzhagen, James Stuart Hodgson, John Henry William Schroeder, and Richard Potter. Of these Head had been chosen merely because of his name and the fact that he had been a Governor-General of Canada: four of the others were simply London financiers.

Watkin, having made his profits as promoter, forthwith proceeded to Canada to negotiate with the Canadian Government on behalf of a subsidiary concern calling itself the Atlantic and Pacific Transit and Telegraph Company. But the Canadian Government wanted a broad highway open to the Pacific and not merely immigration and telegraph and postal systems. "Unless the Atlantic and Pacific Transit and Telegraph Company were prepared to undertake the construction of the road with the telegraph line," Sir John Macdonald's Government could not, "in the present condition of the Canadian exchequer, and with the important questions of boundary, territorial jurisdiction, and form of government in the vast territory proposed to be opened, still unsettled, recommend the acceptance of the 'Heads of Proposal' as submitted by them,

and conditionally approved by the Duke of Newcastle."

The Canadian Ministry further stated, that "in view of the recent change in the constitution and objects of the Hudson's Bay Company, which, from the correspondence laid before the House of Lords, appears to have been effected and the claims which the new organization have reiterated, with the apparent sanction of the Duke of Newcastle, to territorial rights over a vast region *not included in their original charter*, it is highly expedient that steps be taken to settle definitely the North-Western boundary of Canada."

They therefore recommended that correspondence be opened with the Imperial Government, "with a view to the adoption of some speedy, inexpensive, and mutually satisfactory plan to determine the important question, inasmuch as the claims of Canada can be asserted to all that portion of Central British-America which can be shown to have been in the possession of the French at the period of the session in 1763."

Meanwhile, the International Financial Society, Limited, had quietly disappeared, leaving in its stead a "reorganized" Hudson's Bay Company, Sir Edmund Head as Governor, which was, like its predecessor, prepared to make a complete sale of all the Company's rights and claims, either to the Imperial authorities or to Canada.

"The condition of the vast region lying on the North-West of the settled portions of the province," declared Lord Monck, the Governor-General of

Canada, addressing Parliament in February, 1864, "is daily becoming a question of great interest." In the course of the ensuing debate on the Address, the Honourable William McDougall, Minister of Crown Lands, who was officially concerned in the matter, stated that "the Government of Canada had reached a conclusion upon the advisability of determining whether the Red River Territory belonged to Canada or to some other country." McDougall announced as his individual view that "Canada was entitled to claim as a portion of its soil all that part of the North-West territory that could be proved to have been in the possession of the French at the time of the cession of Canada to the British."

It was too much to expect that the Duke of Newcastle would share such a view. Under date of the 11th of March, and the 5th of April, 1864, he had formulated the appended proposals: —

1. The Company to surrender to the Crown its territorial rights.
2. To receive one shilling for every acre sold by the Crown, but limited to £150,000 in all, and to fifty years in duration, whether or not the receipts attained that amount.
3. To receive one fourth of any gold revenue, but limited to £100,000 in all, and to fifty years in duration.
4. To have one square mile of adjacent land for every lineal mile constructed of road and telegraph to British Columbia.

HON. WILLIAM McDOUGALL, C.B.

Wintering Partners neglected

These proposals were carefully considered by Sir Edmund Head and the London board. At a meeting, on the 13th of April, it was decided to accept them, subject to certain alterations. It was urged that the amount of payments within fifty years should either not be limited or else placed at the sum of £1,000,000 sterling, instead of a quarter of that sum. The Company also suggested that a grant be made to it of five thousand acres of "wild land" for every fifty thousand acres sold by the Crown.

The death of the Duke of Newcastle brought in a new Colonial Secretary in Mr. Cardwell, who, on the 6th of June, wrote to say that he could not entertain the amendments of the Company. In the face of this new *impasse*, for several months nothing was done. In December, the Board again met and again showed their eagerness for an arrangement. They even offered to accept £1,000,000 for the territory.

Had Sir Edmund Head and his colleagues in London seen fit to make proper terms with the wintering partners in 1864 much heartburning might have been prevented and a very great deal of violence and political strife averted. And there would have been no Riel rebellion. Moreover, any bargain would have been a good one for the London Board, because it would have been definite: a vague and reluctant arrangement they were compelled to make with Chief Factor Smith, acting on behalf of the wintering partners, in 1871; and even this cost them £107,000. But in 1864 the transfer of territory to the Dominion of Canada had not taken

place, the claim of the wintering partners to an interest in the land had not been pressed. Therefore if the rights of the wintering partners under the Deed Poll of 1821 had been generously bought out at the former date, the grievance under which they subsequently laboured, and the claim which they and their successors maintain to this day, to an interest in the land, would have been removed.

Such, therefore, were the circumstances which caused the Chief Factor at Esquimaux Bay to chafe in his isolation. Events likely profoundly to affect his future were happening on the other side of the Atlantic. He longed to be on the spot and judge their character for himself. On November 5, 1863, he applied for the furlough to which he was now entitled, and in the following year, at the close of the season, he set out in a fishing schooner for St. John's. The passage was an unusually rough one. Mr. Smith fell ill, and was in a helpless condition when he arrived in the Newfoundland capital. His feet were found to be frost-bitten. He was carried ashore and thence conveyed to the house of a friend, where he was in the surgeon's hands for several days. That friend's daughter still possesses the Scotch plaid he left upon the conclusion of his visit. "Take care of it for me," he charged them. "I value it because it was given me by my mother when I left Scotland as a lad." [1]

[1] He makes further allusion to the "Scotch woollen plaid" in course of one of his characteristic business letters: —

RIGOLET, 13th October, 1865.

Your letter enclosing accounts, I have just received, but must defer any examination of the latter, as I am at present very busy

He leaves Labrador

D. A. Smith to Thomas Fraser

HALIFAX, 24th November, 1864.

On the 25th October I left Esquimaux Bay in a vessel bound for St. John's, Newfoundland, which place we expected to reach in three or four days, but having encountered exceedingly boisterous weather we were driven some three hundred miles out to sea and did not reach St. John's till the 7th November. The ship narrowly escaped foundering, there having been at one time three or four feet of water in the cabin. We were of course all thoroughly drenched and remained so for ten days, having had no fire in the cabin for ten days, as the stovepipes had been broken to pieces by the violence of the sea on the 27th ulto. The effect of this

in an endeavour to fit out our vessels, one of which, as you are aware, has not been able to accomplish her intended voyage to Hudson's Bay. I shall be pleased to settle accounts with you next spring or summer.

The bulk of our provisions having come from Canada were landed at North-West River, and on learning from Mr. McPherson that the *Ocean Nymph* has returned, I decided, as we were poorly off for storage here, to retain at North-West River the flour stored there and to make use here of that brought back by the *Ocean Nymph.* We consequently have but little on hand at this post; and as it is now too late to get any more from North-West River this season, I expect not being able to give you the whole quantity you asked for. Mr. Niel has, however, got you say twelve barrels, being, under the circumstances mentioned, all we can possibly spare.

Mr. Prowse gave me very little news, and I am without any latest intelligence either from England or Canada. Many thanks for sending my bedding. There was also a Scotch woollen plaid, which no doubt in the confusion last autumn has been mislaid or lost. The sou'wester was of no use to me, so pray do not think of replacing it.

With kind regards, in which Mrs. Smith joins, to yourself, Mrs. Norman and family, believe me, my dear Sir,

Yours truly,

DON. A. SMITH.

to me was inflammation of the feet with the most excruciating pain from which I have suffered ever since. For this I was treated by the doctors at St. John's with very little benefit, and since I have arrived here I have been under the hands of Dr. Parker and am glad to say that my right foot is now almost quite well, and the other, though still very painful, is much improved, and the doctor assures me that with rest and attention for a week or ten days more I shall have perfectly recovered.

From Halifax Mr. Smith took passage in a steamer, and by the middle of December, 1864, after a fortnight's voyage, he reached his native land from which he had been absent for more than twenty-six years.

It is a little amusing to have people, learning that I have just arrived from the other side [he wrote from Liverpool in November, 1864], put all sorts of questions to me about the American Civil War. One man asked me if I came from the North; I replied in the affirmative. "Then," said he, "is it really the case that your President has proposed a treaty of peace with the South?" I was obliged to interrupt him by informing him that Mr. Lincoln was not my President. "Oh, I see, you come from Canada." Much farther north, I replied, — Labrador. "Really!" he exclaimed; "how interesting. Now, what form of government have you in Labrador?" I told him we enjoyed the benefits of a limited monarchy!

Mr. Smith proceeded without delay to Forres, whither his mother had recently returned from Archieston. Although now almost totally blind,

she was otherwise in good health and welcomed her son home again joyfully.

There are many alive to-day who recall Mrs. Alexander Smith during her son's sojourn, the quiet dignity and restraint of the old lady in her black silk dress, seated in an armchair by the window — her gentle voice, the slight flush on her aged features, and the tremulous lip while her son Donald was by her side.

"He told me," writes Miss Hurlbatt,[1] in those pages narrating her recollections of Lord Strathcona, which I reserve for the last chapter of this book, "of his first visit home to his aged mother, his pride in trying to picture to her how in Canada of that day, when many years were spent in barren wilds, yet there were occasions when the stream of life reached many centres, and brought the great, the rich, the gay into company with those who had often known utter solitude. His mother's quiet hearing of his talk made him strive to heighten the contrasts of his story, assuring her that ladies, titled ladies, the great ones of the earth, had found their way to the then small Hudson's Bay centres, until at last she spoke. Their greatness, their gayeties did not impress her. 'Tell me,' she said, 'were they *gentlewomen?*'" And that was a refrain that echoed in Lord Strathcona's heart and mind, and which found expression so often in his own estimates and in his own words, "Surely it was something for a man to have a mother like that."

His native town of Forres Mr. Smith found

[1] Warden of the Royal Victoria College, Montreal.

little changed; some of his school-fellows were still there. Mr. Robert Watson, in whose office he had imbibed his small stock of legal lore, and copied out reams of foolscap, received his former clerk with cordiality and listened in wonder to his stories of fur-trading life in far-distant Labrador.

Forres was just then in the throes of a railway "boom." In the previous year the last rivet had been fastened in place in the great Spey Viaduct and the Craigellachie Junction Railway was open for traffic. On the same day (July 1, 1863,) the Great North of Scotland Railway, in conjunction with the Keith and Dufftown and Strathspey Railways, began operating the whole system of the Morayshire railways. Donald Smith took delight in travelling from Forres to Elgin and from thence to Craigellachie and Archieston (where his father was born) and along the Spey to Grantown and northward back to Forres.

After some weeks in Forres, he visited Edinburgh and from thence went on to London, where he reported himself at Hudson's Bay House. Here he made the acquaintance of the Governor, Sir Edmund Head, Mr. (afterwards Sir) Curtis Lampson, Eden Colville, and others of the Directors. That he made a favourable impression is attested by the following passage in a letter written by Mr. Colville to Sir Curtis Lampson: —

Smith, the officer in charge of our Esquimaux Bay district, is here and gives a good account of our affairs in that region, where he has been stationed for many years. As he is just the sort of man you would like to

meet, shrewd, and well-informed upon every topic relating to that *terra incognita* of the British Empire, I have asked him to dine with us on the 14th.

The result of this meeting was that Lampson was most favourably impressed by "Labrador" Smith (as he calls him in one of his letters), and especially entertained by the Chief Factor's account of his sub-Arctic farm. That this favourable impression was mutual, is evinced by the following extract from a letter of Mr. Smith: —

To Robert Hamilton

You are all totally misinformed both as to the character and status of Mr. C. M. Lampson. He is not an *American*, but is and has long been a naturalized British subject with enlarged and patriotic views on all matters connected with the interests of this country. Moreover, he has the highest possible opinion of the Company's officers and servants and a desire to do them justice. He told me last evening that there never was a body of men in the service of any corporation in the world of higher intelligence, sobriety, and loftiness of character. His views on the Oregon Boundary question were at the time diametrically opposed to those of the American Government.

During his sojourn in London, Mr. Smith also met Mr. Robert Lowe (afterwards Lord Sherbrooke), with whom he later corresponded. He attended more than one debate in the House of Commons.

But his chief concern was, of course, to make himself master of the conditions and prospects of the

new order of things in Fenchurch Street and the attitude and proposals of the Committee and shareholders.

One of the first persons, not officially connected with the Company, with whom Mr. Smith formed an acquaintance in London was Mr. Alexander Kennedy Isbister, a native of Assiniboia, who had served a brief apprenticeship in the fur-trade, had studied law, had afterwards become schoolmaster, and prospered in his profession in London.[1] For many years past he had taken a keen interest in the affairs of his native land. It was through Mr. Isbister that Mr. Smith received a copy of the following document: —

FORT GARRY, 10th October, 1864.

To the Commissioned Officers in charge of Districts, Northern Department.

GENTLEMEN: —

As most of you are aware, the members of the Northern Council assembled here this spring, taking into consideration the low amount of remuneration for their services obtained of late years by the country partners of the trade, the unsatisfactory prospect for the future held out by the existing Deed Poll, together with the very doubtful tendency of the various expenses proposed for developing the country by the new proprietors of Hudson's Bay stock, addressed a letter to the Governor and Committee in London, on behalf of themselves and brother officers, proposing

[1] He was, for many years, Headmaster of the Stationer's School, residing in Dr. Samuel Johnson's old house in Bolt Court, Fleet Street. He attained the position of Dean of the English College of Preceptors.

certain changes in the arrangements which have so long existed between the country partners and the stockholders. In substance, the propositions made were as follows: Either that a minimum annual income of £350 should be warranted to each Chief Trader and £700 to each Chief Factor under the existing Deed Poll, or else that the Deed Poll itself should be entirely done away with and the income of the officers of the country should no longer be in proportion to the profits of the trade, but that every officer should be paid a fixed salary, according to the value of his services, and that the proprietors should make equitable arrangements to buy up the retired interests due to existing country partners under the present Deed Poll.

Enclosed you will find a copy of the answer received from the Governor and Committee upon which few remarks are necessary. You will observe that they acknowledge the advisability of some change, together with their willingness to meet our wishes, and propose that delegates from both parties should meet in London with a view to the settlement of the matter. The great objection to this course is the delay that must occur before the negotiations can be brought to a conclusion, and Chief Factor William Mactavish has written to recommend that the Committee should send out a proposition of what they consider on their part a fair arrangement for both parties, with a view to the consent of the individual officers in the country being obtained to it if it should prove satisfactory. In the event, however, of their being unwilling to commit themselves to such a course, he has requested them to forward with as little delay as possible a form for the appointment of delegates, which they will consider sufficiently binding on the officers in the country in a

legal point of view, and no delay will take place here in transmitting such form to the different officers for their signatures, with a view to enabling whoever may be appointed by them as delegate to act as early as possible next summer.

The Committee observe that the officers now on the retired list must also consent to the appointments of the delegates, but we do not see the necessity for such a course, and it would certainly occasion great delay in the settlement of the matter as they are scattered in different quarters of the globe, and there would be great difficulty in obtaining their signatures. Those gentlemen retired under the existing Deed Poll and must abide by its tenor or make a separate arrangement for themselves: certainly no course that they could adopt could legally invalidate any new deed between the proprietors and the present acting partners in the country, and no feeling of honour or delicacy binds us to the past generation of officers, however strong the future claims of that generation may be on our good faith and wisdom.

We have to request that you will take the necessary step to acquaint any commissioned officers that may be under your command with the contents of this letter and its enclosure.

This was signed by William Mactavish, James R. Close, and other Chief Factors, who were beginning to be alarmed about their future.

While absent from London, Mr. Smith also received the following from Chief Factor James Anderson:—

What, I fear, we must all make up our minds to is that the Hudson's Bay Company, as it at least existed

since 1821, has passed away and been replaced by another organization, as far as the London directorate is concerned, with different views and objects. This change has been made without our consent on the supposition that our interests would be unaffected. Such a supposition is of course untenable. The wintering partners represent the fur-trade and the whole object and mainspring of the old company was the fur-trade. Moreover, the right to the lands not comprised in the original charter was the right acquired by the partners of the North-West Company who executed the Deed Poll of 1821.

Writing to Mr. Barnston, Mr. Smith himself said: —

We must be prepared not to receive very much sympathy from the new shareholders or the new Board. You will remember that Governor Shepherd told the Colonial Secretary distinctly that "no change in the condition or settlement of the country could be carried into effect without their willing coöperation and assistance; their just claims must be considered in any new arrangements." Unfortunately our danger comes from the stockholders, who do not and will not trouble to understand the situation. As Governor Shepherd said, "they are of the usual class of investors, indifferent to any other question in the present discussion than the security of their capital and dividends."

There was trouble ahead for the "wintering partners." Little did Mr. Smith imagine then that six short years later he would be chosen by them to be the spokesman in London of the entire fur-trade.

Between London and Scotland he passed several

pleasant months. In June, 1865, he was ready to return to Esquimaux Bay. According to ancient custom the Directors of the Company dined at Greenwich on the day preceding the departure of the ship, when that great flow of speech-making took place which Ballantyne has amusingly satirized in his *Hudson Bay*.

On the present occasion Mr. Smith received an intimation that he would be called upon to reply to the toast of "The Commissioned Officers." The following extract from notes in his handwriting will exhibit Mr. Smith's intention not to rise in his place at the banquet unprepared.

Although I have had the honour accorded me this evening of replying to the toast of the Commissioned Officers of the Company, yet I feel I ought to say at the outset that I represent its interests only in an obscure and little known district, unlike others present who dwell amidst the comparative luxury of Saskatchewan and the relative refinement of Assiniboia and one able to voice sentiments and perchance grievances to which we in benighted Labrador are as yet total strangers.

Yet if I should convey the impression that we in the far east of the Company's field of operations, nearer to Britain as we may be, but separated by hundreds of leagues and any direct and convenient route of transportation from the capital and seat of the fur-trade, are not animated by the same purpose, and inspired by the same spirit of loyalty to the Company, and I hasten to add, to one another, I should be doing a grievous injustice to the officers and servants in Labrador.

Failure to speak

The banquet was at its height of conviviality when the Chairman arose and called upon Chief Factor Donald A. Smith, of Esquimaux Bay, to respond to the toast of "The Commissioned Officers of the Honourable Hudson's Bay Company." All eyes turned to Mr. Smith's place at the table. It was vacant. The man who could face wild animals in the wilderness, who could five years later assert himself against the dictator, Louis Riel, who could later brave the wrath of Sir John A. Macdonald and his whole party, flinched before this ordeal. He had silently left the room, and the next morning explained to the Chairman that, being "unaccustomed to public speaking, he had shrunk from making an exhibition equally painful to himself and his auditors."

Privately, he resolved that never again would he lose an opportunity of speaking in public. He kept his word, even if on one occasion, already noted, he was reduced to the expedient of reciting *in extenso* a metrical version of the Psalms.

CHAPTER VII

TAKING LEAVE OF LABRADOR

1865–1868

At Rigolet a salute from the cannon in front of the agent's house one bright June morning welcomed back the Chief Factor Smith on board the *Ocean Nymph* to the scene of his duties. This trip to Britain marked a fresh turning-point in his career. He was thenceforward no longer hidden in obscurity: his character and abilities were personally known to the reigning powers in Fenchurch Street; and more than one of the new Directors recognized in the officer in charge of Esquimaux Bay and Ungava, a man of great experience, clear-brained, and of consummate resource. He had also made a few friends on the other side of the Atlantic. Events were looming up on the horizon which would give Donald Alexander Smith the opportunity he sought.

But in Canada he is as yet unknown — even to the bulk of the officers of the service. Unknown he is, too, to the members of the Council of the Fur-Trade of Assiniboia, who were prone to consider Labrador as almost outside the scheme of things, as they habitually thought of that scheme in the Hudson's Bay Company's service. As for the merchants, the capitalists, the politicians, and the journalists of the Canadian metropolis, neither

Labrador nor its recognized leading spirit had for them either objective or subjective existence.

Yet it was to Canada, now within measurable distance of the Confederation of all the Provinces of British North America, rather than to Britain that Mr. Smith's mind was now turned and his awakening ambitions directed. When he left the Thames in 1838 a rebellion had just been crushed in the upper and lower Provinces. Before he departed from British shores in 1865, he knew that Lee had surrendered at Appomattox and that the long struggle in America was over. The effect on Canada and Canadian mercantile enterprise of the new order of things which would now be ushered in could not fail to be marked.

The winter post of 1865–66 brought a characteristic letter from his old friend, Chief Factor Anderson, who had settled in Upper Canada. He tells Mr. Smith how fatal the past year or two has been to the old fur-traders.

"Death has," he writes, "reaped a rich harvest among the North-Westers. Chief Factor Hargrave, Chief Traders Corcoran, Hardisty, Cameron, Swanston, Leith Robertson (son of the late C. F. Robertson)."

He adds with a fine careless touch — as a thing of minor interest: —

Lord Palmerston is dead. Lord John Russell will succeed him, or I rather think, Gladstone. You may imagine that I am quite *au fait* about Hudson's Bay affairs. If so, you are utterly mistaken. When Watkin and Dallas were here, I wished to get all the

old Chief Factors up. Not one but myself went to Montreal and told them my opinion of the mendacity and meanness of the old Company. I hate to mention names, but one of our Chief Factors came out with me and said, "You are a brick, you have just said enough rather strongly but certainly to the point."

Not one of these new people defended the old Company regarding their breach of promise to inform us if any negotiations were undertaken.

. . . The American Secretary Seward has been trying it on to make the British Government responsible for the depredations of the *Alabama*, but Lord John Russell has utterly refused his demands.

In the following summer Chief Factor Smith paid his first visit to Boston and New York, from whence he proceeded to Montreal.

Montreal [he writes] has greatly changed and everywhere for the better. The numerous new buildings which have been erected in the last ten or fifteen years alone tell a tale of prosperity. You would not have recognized St. Peter Street and St. Paul Street. Mr. Caverhill has put up a limestone block six stories high which is said to be the finest in the Canadas.

And again: —

The object I most wanted to see in Montreal was the Victoria Bridge, which is truly one of the wonders of the world, and gives Montreal an unbroken railway communication of 1100 miles, besides connections. The bridge proper is about a mile and a quarter long and rests upon twenty-four stone piers, which are calculated to resist a pressure of 70,000 tons. I mention this circumstance, because, when it was built, a party

here tried to discourage the project by showing that the force of the ice would crush the structure like an eggshell. Mr. Stephenson came and demonstrated that a pressure of 10,000 tons was unheard of.

The reigning sensation in Montreal that spring and summer of 1866 was the Fenian raid, concerning which Mr. Smith addressed a letter to the Company on the 8th of June. A generation earlier the Company's property and the lives of its servants had been imperilled by the *habitant* uprising and the memory of those stirring times was vividly present with him.

Information having reached the Canadian Government from many quarters that an inroad was imminent, and this information being supported by police reports of suspicious persons having been recognized entering Canada from the United States, as well as by open avowals at the Fenian public meetings, the Executive Council passed a minute on the 7th of March, calling out for duty 10,000 Canadian Volunteers.

About the end of May the Fenian preparations were completed. Stores of arms and ammunition had been placed at convenient stations along the frontier, and the word had been given for an attack. On the 31st of May the Fenians began the march, detachments of 200 and 300 men, calling themselves railway labourers on their way to the West, began to arrive at Buffalo and St. Albans from the large towns. By the evening of that day, a body of Fenians, estimated at upwards of 1000, had reached Buffalo, and, on the morning of the 1st of June,

850 of them crossed over to Fort Erie, on the opposite bank of the Niagara River. Several arrests were made at St. Albans, and elsewhere; and Roberts, the President of the Fenian Senate, and chief instigator of the raid, was taken into custody at New York.

Immediately on receipt of the intelligence of the invasion, Major-General Napier pushed on by rail to Chippewa a force consisting of artillery and regular troops under Colonel Peacocke, 16th Regiment. The Fenians, however, did not await his arrival, but recrossed the river during the night between the 2d and 3d of June, to the number of about 750 men, and were immediately arrested by the authorities of the United States. "I am happy to be able to inform you," wrote Lord Monck to the British Government, "that the officers of the United States Government appear to have exerted themselves to prevent any assistance being supplied to the invaders. We have sixty-five prisoners in our possession, who have been by my direction committed to the common gaol at Toronto to await trial."

Nevertheless, as Mr. Smith writes, "I formed so low an opinion of these wretched Fenian troops as not to have been able to look upon the whole affair in anything like the same serious light in which it has generally been viewed by those who have not come so closely in contact with them." He himself had met a large body of them on his way from New York to Montreal and was not struck by their discipline or martial character.

George Stephen

I first saw Sir Donald Smith on his visit to Montreal in 1866 [wrote a Chief Factor who died within the past decade]. He had been spending some days at Lachine with his wife and two children, where his mother-in-law, Mrs. Richard Hardisty, then resided and continued to reside until 1876. One morning he said, "I have a cousin in Montreal, Mr. George Stephen, whom I have never seen. Do you know anything about him? He's a prominent man in the woollen trade, I believe." I said I had heard of Mr. Stephen, who had been a junior partner with his cousin, William Stephen, in a firm of wholesale drapers and was now established for himself. As Mrs. Smith had some shopping to do, we all went into the city together. I gave him Mr. Stephen's address and we parted company. A couple of hours later I met all the Smiths in St. James Street, loaded down with parcels, and Mr. Smith carrying a rather gaudy carpet-bag. He stopped to show me the bag, and asked my opinion of it. "It's just the thing for the Labrador," he said. "It'll make a great hit with the Indians there." I enquired if he had met his cousin, Mr. Stephen. "Oh, yes," he said; "I went in and had a few moments' conversation with him." "I suppose he was glad to see you, eh?" Mr. Smith seemed a little embarrassed at the question, but his wife exclaimed in her charming, sprightly style: "Really, why should Mr. Stephen be glad to see country cousins like us — all the way from the Labrador? I wish," she added slily, — "I wish he had waited until he had met Mr. Stephen before buying that red carpet-bag. But he would n't let me carry it and the rest of us waited outside."

Such was the first meeting between the first cousins, and future peers, Donald Alexander Smith

and George Stephen. How reminiscent is it of other homely but fateful encounters in the lives of self-made men! There was certainly in it little suggestion of future intimacy or cordiality, nothing to augur the great events with which later history was to link the names of these two men.

As I have already noted, George Stephen (afterwards Lord Mount Stephen) was born in 1829 at Dufftown, on the borders of Elgin, his mother being Elspeth Smith, Alexander's niece. He had embarked in the drapery business in Aberdeen, and in 1850 on the invitation of his cousin William Stephen, who had established a thriving business in Montreal, he came out to Canada to assist in the enterprise. His natural ability and a very pleasing and impressive personality quickly insured his promotion. He became a buyer in the firm of William Stephen, in which capacity he was sent annually to London, and eventually became a partner. The firm prospered; the accumulation of profits gave opportunities for investment of which young Stephen availed himself in so adroit and masterful a manner as occasionally to stagger the head of the firm. There are some still living in Montreal who remember Mr. William Stephen, and his uneasiness over some of his young relative's financial excursions. More than once his consent to some arrangement or other would be prefaced by the half-serious comment, "Well, it is clear George is going to ruin the firm, so it might as well come now as at a later time."

However inauspicious this interview between

the cousins, it was not long before Mr. Smith had resolved to cultivate a closer association. Before he left Montreal he was to see Mr. Stephen in a new rôle. Canada's commercial capital was during that July stirred by what were called the alarming free-trade tendencies of the Finance Minister, Honourable A. T. Galt, who had just proposed in Parliament a reduction in the tariff on manufactured goods. Meetings of protest against the Budget were held in Montreal. At one of these the Mayor presided. This was Mr. Smith's first contact with those national issues and contentions which were afterwards, when he entered the political arena, to lead him to support the party of Sir John Macdonald and the principles of the National Policy. The Mayor asked his hearers to

look round and see what the tariff has done for Canada and Montreal and then it may be judged that the change was impolitic and bad. They need not go beyond Montreal; they had only to go to the Place d'Armes and see the good effect of increased production. If this were removed, the young men and women would have to leave and go to the States. He trusted the remonstrances from the mechanics and manufacturers of Montreal would be effectual. He regretted that the Government which had his confidence and support would spring a mine now when we were on the eve of other great changes. He would not ask anything but what was reasonable, nor would the city of Montreal ask for any prohibitory tariff. They simply asked the Government to let well alone. All could see how prosperous Canada had become within the

last few years. By the change now proposed, that prosperity would disappear.

According to another speaker: —

Not much development could be looked for if they were prepared to continue in a state of pupillage and went in for sweeping away all incidental protection. There was a large Provincial debt for which the interest must be provided. If so, why should not the revenue be obtained by the impost on manufactured goods which would be giving no unfair advantage, but would have the effect of providing a market? If after investing large sums in the confidence that one course of policy would be continued, the Government suddenly cut off the market by an entire change, it would cause complete ruin, the population would drift away, and the country must be content to take a very subordinate position. We are a very great people, no doubt, but we occupy but a narrow strip over-shadowed by the high trees on the other side of the boundary line, and we must try to get all the sunshine we can. It was most unfair after fostering industrial enterprises that the Finance Minister, for what purpose he could not imagine, should cut away the ground from under their feet.

Another merchant, afterwards one of Mr. Smith's friends, declared that

he had been fifty years in Montreal, and knew something of the city and its interests. He remembered when they had no manufactures and nothing to employ the men in winter and he had seen nine hundred men in gaol at once, not as criminals, but to obtain relief and be kept there for months when there was

nothing to do. It was only within the last twenty years that there had been any manufacturing employment and those works were only in their infancy. Only since their establishment had there been any fair measure of prosperity, and now it was very rare to see men unemployed congregating to look for work. For five months in the year the country was shut so that there was no labouring the ground, and unless there were manufactures the people would be beggared or would have to go to another country to live.

At this point a gentleman arose. It was Mr. Smith's cousin, George Stephen. To the surprise of all he boldly defended the Budget.

As a member of a rather important interest, in the manufacture of which the duty was proposed to be changed from twenty to fifteen per cent, as a manufacturer in both Upper and Lower Canada, he was satisfied that they could work at a profit with that rate of protection, and, moreover, he felt that any manufacture which was not fit to work with a protection of fifteen per cent should not exist. If they could not exist with that protection with the crippled resources and deranged currency of the United States, he thought it was a very blue outlook for Canada.

This moderate speech of Mr. Stephen was received with a storm of hisses and other signs of disapproval and the meeting at length broke up in confusion. It was clear that the manufacturing interests of Canada wanted a fuller measure of protection for native industries.

Nevertheless, Mr. Smith was profoundly impressed as much by his cousin's bearing and courage

as by his arguments. He afterwards confessed that that speech of Stephen's gave a new bias to his thoughts. It sharpened his interest in the fiscal policy of the Government and particularly in the commercial interests of Montreal. In short, the political neophyte from Labrador had undergone his initiation. The following letter possesses some interest as having been addressed by Mr. Stephen to a stanch free-trader in Montreal, afterwards himself famous as Sir William Macdonald: —

MONTREAL, July 4th, 1866.

DEAR MR. MACDONALD, —

I am very glad that you approve of the sentiments I expressed at the meeting. Many of our people are misled by the newspapers and current talk and do not know what is good for them. I am told it is a wonder I was n't lynched, but I spoke only for myself. If my name is of any use you are welcome to it.

Yours truly,

GEORGE STEPHEN.

The result of this exchange of views was the foundation of a local Free-trade League.

Another incident of Mr. Smith's sojourn in Montreal must be noted. In July the first despatches were received by the newly completed Atlantic cable telegraph. He took a deep interest in it, — its possibilities strongly appealed to him, as they had on the occasion of Sir Leopold McClintock's visit to Esquimaux Bay six years before. He writes: —

We have the London reports of yesterday, and we will shortly have daily reports from Europe, which will put the shipping business on a new footing. Those

shipping produce by ocean steamers can hereafter operate with greater certainty — results with reference to the state of British market. It will have a powerful effect on ocean steamship stock, and the existence of ocean telegraph lines will probably bring about the substitution of steam for sailing vessels. I entirely agree with the writer in to-day's *Gazette* that the Ocean Telegraph, while tending to reduce profit, will also reduce losses.[1]

During his stay in Montreal, Mr. Smith also met Mr. E. H. King, manager of the Bank of Montreal; Mr. (afterwards Sir) Hugh Allan, the famous ship-owner; and several other Montreal worthies in the sphere of finance with whom he was shortly to be associated.

On the 1st of August, 1866, Mr. Smith left on the Company's steamer *Ripple* for Esquimaux Bay.

[1] The profits of commerce will be less than heretofore, and losses will also be less; and the causes of sudden revulsions and periodic commercial disasters will in a great measure be removed. We see in this new daily communication between America and Europe the great regulator of trade. We see in it a new and controlling influence in the affairs of this continent financially and commercially; perhaps also politically. That systematic impulse which moves the great masses of the leaders in commerce and public affairs in Europe will be communicated to the same class of persons on this side of the Atlantic before its effect has had time to die out or be killed by the thoughts, heretofore arising, that affairs may have changed, and we will wait the next news, and therefore its influence will be received and felt in all departments of civilized life. But it is quite impossible to estimate the wonderful changes which this new connecting agent may produce. The mind may travel forward into the great future, speculating upon probabilities which are more than possible to an unlimited extent. The ocean telegraph is the completing link in the progressive influence of steam, and its addition to this wonderful adjunct of civilized progress will be felt, especially on this continent, in almost every branch of industrial pursuit, as well as in commercial life. (*Montreal Gazette*, July 31, 1866.)

There sailed with him a young apprentice clerk, Mr. W. D. B. Scott, at present manager of the Labrador Company, who cherishes many memories of his Chief Factor's conversation and kindness to him on this journey and in the several subsequent years that he served under him at North-West River. On the 8th of August the vessel arrived at Rigolet. After the labour incidental to loading of the homeward-bound ship and packing of salmon had been disposed of, the Chief Factor returned to North-West River. It was to be his last winter in Esquimaux Bay. He returned to find that in consequence of his many representations a competent mineralogist, Mr. Bauerman, had arrived in the Company's new ship, the *Labrador*, and was now spending the summer in surveying all that part of the coast supposed to contain minerals. The expedition was of value, but some of the shareholders expressed themselves as disappointed because no gold mines were found!

The Ungava district having been reopened, the *Labrador* undertook a sealing voyage, not along the Newfoundland coast as Chief Factor Smith recommended, but to Greenland instead, an enterprise not attended with the success hoped for.

That autumn and winter was a busy one for Mr. Smith. He opened a correspondence with Mr. Stephen and also began to make inquiries concerning certain industrial and commercial enterprises which were then on foot in Montreal. As a result of frugality, he was master of several thousand pounds, much of which he had invested in the stock

of the Bank of Montreal.[1] In consequence, too, of his reputation for probity and shrewdness, several of the clerks and even one Chief Trader had, early in 1865, entrusted him with their savings in preference to sending them to the gentlemen in charge of the Company's "Cash Account," as it was called, in Montreal. It had long been a practice of the Company, and indeed was a necessity where the commissioned officers were far removed from the financial centres, to retain considerable sums for investment, frequently amounting to the entire earnings of its salaried officers for a term of years, and paying therefor commonly a higher rate of interest than could elsewhere be obtained. An official was chosen especially for this purpose, and in his capacity of banker to the wintering partners even found means to add materially to the Company's exchequer.

It was natural that this branch of the business should attain to quite respectable proportions. Men immured for many years uninterruptedly in remote solitudes have few opportunities for pecuniary extravagance, and when this race of industrious hermits happen to be Scotsmen, even allowing for any strain of Highland recklessness, it was reasonable to expect that of the tens of thousand dollars distributed annually in profits to the wintering partners, seven eighths of the sum total should pass into the hands of the Company's official banker. Originally the Company had granted a uniform

[1] His name appears as a shareholder of the Bank as early as 1848.

rate of interest of four per cent on the funds entrusted to it, but since Sir George Simpson's death, the temptation to make special outside investments had increased. Moreover, since 1860, opportunities for safe investment were growing. The railways and steamships began to afford this in abundance, and a large number of new banks, insurance and trust companies offered tempting inducements to the small capitalist.

In 1866, Mr. E. M. Hopkins, whose acquaintance we have already made as Sir George Simpson's secretary, was in charge of the "Private Cash" business. If to many of the factors and traders, whose worldly wealth was in his hands, Hopkins seemed unduly conservative, this was the result of his training. Hopkins frankly avowed that he thought Canada was, on the strength of Confederation being close at hand, advancing a little too fast. Many of the enterprises, so highly lauded in the prospectuses scattered broadcast in such confusion amongst the investing community, were "unstable and illusory." He was not alone in this opinion. Many a responsible Canadian merchant looked with frank misgivings upon nascent local undertakings as worthy only of the attention of the less sagacious and more speculative British investor, himself confining his own operations to sound and proved British joint-stock companies.

This timid spirit survived down to a comparatively recent period in Canadian commercial history. Albeit a change began to be noted in the late "sixties," a sentiment of firmer self-reliance

upon native commercial and industrial resources. This movement must be ascribed to a small group of Montreal merchants and capitalists with whom Donald Alexander Smith was soon closely to ally himself and was eventually to rule.

At Halifax in the late autumn of 1864, he had noted the almost spectacular profits which were being made out of the contraband trade with the Confederacy. It was on this occasion that he invested one hundred pounds for a friend in the cargo of a small steamer about to undertake to run the blockade and put into Wilmington, North Carolina. On the previous voyage the cargo had resulted in a profit for the adventurers of two hundred per cent; nevertheless he counselled against it. "In the first place," he wrote, "the risk is too great, and in the second place, the whole enterprise is against my principles." He was greatly relieved when the cargo was actually landed and paid for in gold, and on one of the last successful blockade-runnings the friend for whom he had invested actually received one hundred and fifty per cent for the grave risk he had run. It is now known that many reputable Canadian as well as Glasgow and Liverpool merchants made large fortunes out of the contraband trade during the Civil War, and at least two retired Hudson's Bay Chief Factors trusted considerable sums to these most precarious transactions.

Meanwhile, letters from England continued to inform him of the fortunes and plans of the Company. The Board was striving its utmost to sell

to Her Majesty's Government, for an enormous sum, territory to which in the opinion of the Honourable George Brown, sent to England as a Canadian Commissioner, "they had no title under their charter." Mr. Brown expressed also the opinion that it was the part of the Imperial authorities to secure the extinction of the Company's proprietary rights and exclusive privileges of trade, and that then Canada should step in and undertake the duties of government.

The situation is thus described by Mr. Cardwell, the British Colonial Secretary: —

> The Canadian Ministers desired that that territory [Rupert's Land] should be made over to Canada, and undertook to negotiate with the Hudson's Bay Company for the termination of their rights, on condition that the indemnity, if any should be paid, would be raised by Canada, by means of a loan under Imperial guaranty. With the sanction of the Cabinet, we assented to the proposal, undertaking that if the negotiations should be successful, we, on the part of the Crown, being satisfied that the amount of the indemnity was reasonable, and the security sufficient, would apply to the Imperial Parliament to sanction the arrangement and guarantee the amount.

In June, 1866, the Canadian Ministry, while contesting in many respects the pretensions of the Company, at the same time expressed a strong conviction of the importance of establishing at an early date a regular government in the territories intervening between Canada and British Columbia. The former would have opened negotiations

with the Company for the extinction of their claims were it not for the prospect of a speedy confederation of all the Provinces. The Canadian Ministers thought it "improper to enter upon negotiations which could only be completed and fulfilled by the Confederate Government and Legislature, but had no doubt that these would feel it to be one of their first duties to open negotiations with the Hudson's Bay Company, for the transfer of their claims to the territory." A Minute-of-Council invited the aid of Her Majesty's Government, in discountenancing and preventing any such sales of any portion of the territory as were contemplated by the Hudson's Bay Company.

All this while the question of the reorganization of the fur-trade, the abrogation of the old Deed Poll of 1821, and the remuneration of the officers continued to drag along. What compensation would the officers receive? What would the re-organized Company consider equitable? There were many points to be settled, and Mr. Smith's correspondence with Mr. Isbister and others induced a clear perception of the danger the wintering partners were running of being "left out in the cold."

From Chief Factor James Anderson

Lake Simcoe, C.N.,
8th November, 1866.

. . . The Company have, I believe, sold their territorial rights, retaining their posts, and right to trade as individuals or a Company. I advised that arrangement ten years ago, most strongly.

I now learn that it has been decided that the officers in this country are to receive their share of the proceeds of the Fenchurch Street buildings, but Council's opinion is that the Governor and Committee can when they choose withhold promotion and pocket the dividends, which by the Deed Poll ought to go to the partners in the country. I do not believe that they can, and if they do, they will make such a discontent in the country that they will lose more than they will gain by the move.

Governor Dallas suggested that the value of a retired interest should be fixed and a money compensation paid to each officer on agreeing to the abrogation of the Deed Poll. The value of an eighty-fifth share, based on the average of the previous thirteen outfits, was estimated at £408, at which rate a Chief Factor's retired interest would amount to £3264, and a Chief Trader's to £1632. To these sums should be added a customary year's furlough before retiring. On such a scale of commutation it would cost the Company £114,503. To counterbalance this expense, Dallas proposed a new scale of salaries. Hitherto the average pay of officers in the service was, to the Governor-in-Chief, £2000; sixteen Chief Factors, £12,000; thirty-five Chief Traders, £14,000; which with £10,000 to the Clerks brought the total officers' pay-roll to £38,000. He planned to reduce this by more than one third, thus: Governor-in-Chief, £2000; Lieutenant-Governor, £1250; four Councillors, at £800, £3200; twenty-five Chief Traders, at £800, £7500; one hundred Clerks at various

salaries, £10,000; total, £23,950. The Company had sought the opinion of Sir Hugh Cairns, who, on a superficial examination, had taken a mere *ex parte* view of the case. Consequently, when on July 1, 1866, the Northern Council had met at Norway House, the members agreed to put their protest in the form of a letter to Acting Governor William Mactavish. The Governor and Committee, they declared, had expressed themselves as desirous of effecting a reasonable adjustment, but "something more" was wanted than what they at present appeared disposed to yield.

The perusal of the legal opinion of Sir Hugh Cairns, which has been submitted to us, has created a feeling of distrust in our minds; for it is very evident to us that the instructions to counsel in laying the case before him are one-sided, and betray a strong inclination to deprive us of all our privileges, on points of the Deed Poll, which never before have been questioned, and which usage had continued to us.

We again respectfully submit that we earnestly require the Deed Poll to be revised, errors corrected, the purport of the clause referring to the Fenchurch Street premises followed in accordance with the opinion of a valued accountant and the vacancies among the Chief Factors and Chief Traders, created by death or retirement, filled up immediately.

We further desire that legal opinion be taken anew on the existing Deed Poll, the solicitor drawing up the instructions to counsel, having first acquired a correct insight into the reading of it which usage and equity confirm, and we think that you are best able to show how it has been understood among us.

In addition, we think we are claiming only what is due to us in desiring that the interest annually debited the trade on the balance of paper currency in circulation at Red River be written off, and said balance of currency be considered merely as an outstanding account from year to year.

We feel that the increased allowances to the Governor and Board of Directors on the creation of a new office of Advisor in the House at a cost of £1500 per annum go a great way to crippling their Honours' power of liberality to us who have borne the burden of the business and devoted the energy of our lives to the trade, and while we can see the proprietors are struggling under the effects of an expensive bargain with their predecessors, we deem it particularly hard that on us and our families its effect should fall.

We desire to receive a direct reply to the question, What disposition is to be made of the proceeds of the claim on the United States, if recovered?

In order to carry out the foregoing views, we beg to request that after the completion of your present tour, you will undertake another journey to London so that you may in person receive ultimatum of their Honours and represent to them unless they make some further concessions the business cannot hang together.

This was signed by Chief Factors William J. Christie and James A. Grahame, and by Chief Traders Robert Campbell, Alexander Christie, James G. Stewart, Joseph Wilson, William McMurray, Charles P. Griffair, Thomas Taylor, Roderick McKenzie, and Samuel Mackenzie. It was not submitted to Chief Factor Smith or to any in the Montreal department.

There was a proposal made in February, 1866, to Governor Head, by an American syndicate, to purchase and settle portions of the Company's territory. Mr. Smith wrote:—

I can hardly believe that all these negotiations can be protracted without great damage to the Company. It is unsettling to the shareholders, and unsettling to the officers in North America and the people dwelling on the Company's lands. Sir Edmund has done everything in his power to induce either the Imperial or the Canadian Parliament to act. I, myself, should regret to see McEwen's party acquire any considerable portion of the territory, as long as there is a prospect of Canada stepping in; but it is unfair to ask the Company to continue the option indefinitely.

The following winter and spring (1867) Chief Factor Smith and his family spent at Mingan in the course of a round of official visits to the posts of the North shore or the Canadian Labrador. For by this time the advantage of bringing Mingan, Seven Islands, and Bersimits within his charge had become manifest to the London Board, although the actual inclusion of the two posts last-named within the Labrador district did not take place until 1868.

In the year 1867 [reported the zealous missionary Père Bebel], I encountered at Mingan Mr. Smith, who awaited with his family the arrival of the Company's steamer coming from England. I embarked with him to reach the post on North-West River, situated at the bottom of Esquimaux Bay, where salt water ends, 180 miles from the ocean. At this post, I found 32

Christian families, four of whom had never seen a priest, and 30 infidel Nascopies who had come down with the traders. I began the instruction of these pagans, but as each of them had left two or three wives at Fort Nascopie, I could do nothing for them until I had regularized their position according to the precepts of the Christian religion. Having laboured, however, amongst them for three weeks, I went up with them as far as Fort Nascopie or Petatstekupau. In this voyage of 1200 miles, in canoe, I baptized 81 infidels.[1]

Donald A. Smith was at Mingan when the British North America Act went into operation and Lord Monck as Governor-General proclaimed the birth of the Dominion of Canada. All that day the Union Jack fluttered from the summit of the Mingan flagstaff.

He had previously written: —

It is arranged that the Premiership of the New Confederation of the Provinces will be held by the Honourable John A. Macdonald of Kingston. In his Cabinet will certainly be Mr. Alexander Galt, the son of John Galt, who did so much to settle the Upper Provinces. . . .

C. M. Lampson to Sir Stafford Northcote

November 26, 1868.

My dear Sir Stafford: —

I am glad that you agree with me that Donald A. Smith, Chief Factor of the Esquimaux Bay district, is the best man for the post and for the purpose. From

[1] *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi.* 1868.

what I have seen of him and know from his reports, he is really a person of extraordinary ability and judgment and may safely be relied on for any contingency which may arise. He has been in the Company's service about thirty years and it is entirely owing to him that our Labrador affairs have continued in a satisfactory state. Moreover, he enjoys in a marked degree the complete confidence of all those in the service with whom he has had relations.

Yours very faithfully,

CURTIS M. LAMPSON.

In Montreal he had already established important commercial connections. As he testified a year or two later: —

Shortly before leaving Canada, I myself was in business connection with such men as Mr. Hugh Allan, Mr. A. Allan of the steamboat line; Mr. King, President of the Bank of Montreal; Mr. Redpath, the owner of one of the most extensive establishments in Canada; and other men of note there. Our object was to get up a Rolling Stock Company. In the first instance we had, I think, a contract for some five hundred cars. And some fine day I hope that the townsmen of Winnipeg will see some of these cars laden with the manufactures of Canada, and returning laden with the surplus products of this country. Though I have a connection with the Hudson's Bay Company, I may also say that I have been largely connected with public enterprises. I have had a considerable connection with a large woollen mill in Cornwall. Some of their blankets have already come here, and no doubt many more will come in, if you find them better and cheaper than others. I hope yet to see men come in here, establish

such manufactures, use up your wool, and circulate more money in the place. This they will do, no doubt, as soon as they will find it to their advantage.[1]

From Thomas Hardisty

LACHINE, 18th March, 1868.

. . . Dugald Mactavish is still here, but he will be leaving in a short time for Washington to look after the Company's affairs there, about the Oregon Territory affair. The Governor is expected here in a short while. If he does come I suppose he will come along with the letters from the North. Mr. Swanston told me yesterday that he had seen in the papers that Governor Mactavish had won his suit with the Hudson's Bay Company regarding the Fenchurch Street property.

There is a report here that Hopkins will soon be resigning and going home to England to take Smith's place there; whether there is any foundation for the same I cannot say.

I see by the papers that Disraeli has been made Prime Minister of England instead of the Earl of Derby who has resigned. The Fenian excitement still continues in Great Britain. The police are on the alert and are making arrests pretty often.

With the death of the Company's Governor, Sir Edmund Head, and the choice of his successor in the person of Sir Stafford Northcote in 1867, numerous changes in the Company's internal organization carried. In the following year Chief Factor Smith received instructions to winter at Montreal with a view to familiarizing himself with the work of the headquarters office there. Mean-

[1] Speech to Red River Convention, January 25, 1870.

while, it was proposed to throw the Esquimaux Bay and Ungava district into the Montreal department, and before Christmas, 1868, Mr. Smith was summoned to confer with the Directors in the matter. By the middle of January he had engaged his passage on the steamer *Moravian* sailing from Portland. The result of this visit may be stated briefly. Mr. Smith was formally appointed to the charge of the Montreal department incorporating therewith the Labrador district, and he was authorized to make the necessary disposition of officers, clerks, and servants as circumstances demanded.

At the close of the previous summer the Chief Factor bade farewell to Esquimaux Bay, where he had spent twenty industrious years.

"People speak of the solitude of Labrador," he used to say afterwards. "It was n't a solitude for me. I knew everybody there, from the oldest white traders and fishermen to the youngest Indian hunters and Esquimaux, and even their dogs. I knew every turn in the coast-line and bend in the river, and every natural object had an interest for me. As for *ennui*, I can honestly say I did not know the meaning of the term. Time never hung heavily on my hands; I was always busy, and when I had no actual and definite task, I was planning."

We are not without testimony as to how the Chief Factor was regarded on the eve of his departure. In a letter to a friend, Captain Nathan Norman writes: —

I spent an hour with Chief Factor Smith last evening. He says he will probably never spend a winter here again and I should not be surprised if he were to give up Labrador altogether. He is a most remarkable man and the wonder is the Company has managed to keep him up here so long. He said if the whole of Labrador were organized on a proper basis and under one control, it would prove to be a prosperous and profitable country in spite of the drawbacks of the climate. He believes there are minerals here which will some day astonish the world.

One of the surviving fur-traders recalls:—

My most vivid impression of my old Bourgeois is that he was always the gentleman. None ever took any liberties with him. He was always referred to as *Mr.* Smith, even behind his back, when any other officer in Labrador would have been called *Smith.*[1]

Forty years later this trader, Mr. Fraser, had an interview with Lord Strathcona in London at Hudson's Bay House. "His Lordship asked me about the fishing stations on the inlet. 'Name them.' I named three or four, omitting two in order. 'Ah,' he said, 'why do you not mention So-and-So? Who is fishing there now? Tom Biggs? Ah, yes. His father fished there before him. I remember him well.'"

Another of Chief Factor Smith's clerks, Mr. James Wilson, recalls also that

Mr. Smith always was very courteous and very frugal. He never lost his temper. Once at North-

[1] Factor James Fraser, formerly of North-West River and Rigolet.

West River an old employee named Irvine was nailing down casks. Mr. Smith came along and said: "You are putting too many nails in those casks. You must n't put so many nails." The man lost his temper. "I've always put as many nails. I've been twenty years here. If you know better than I do," said the man, throwing down his tools, "I'd better go."

"No," said Mr. Smith calmly, "just put fewer nails." As the man continued to grumble, the Bourgeois requested him to meet him at the fort at a certain hour. At the time appointed, he went and listened for half an hour to a stern lecture on his disobedience and insubordination. He was brought to reason and remorse. "And now," said Mr. Smith, shaking hands, "we'd better step this way." The man thought he was going to be discharged. A door was opened. "Mrs. Smith is waiting for us. She would like to offer you a little refreshment before you go." So they adjourned to the sitting-room where cake and wine were on a table and he was cordially entertained. "We'll just forget all about it," said the Chief Factor good-humouredly.

The man was completely won and thereafter became Donald A. Smith's friend and champion.

Chief Factor Smith's departure was a great blow to Labrador. Had he remained a few years more, there might have been seen the establishment of great markets, and having the command of capital, the lamentable waste which to-day Dr. Grenfell deplores would have no existence.

There is as yet no cold storage to improve the value of exports. All offal of cod and all coarse fish are wasted. Capelin and herring are put to no commer-

cial value. Our innumerable berries rot where they grow. There has been no attempt whatever at the adaptation of plants or animals. Immense water powers and vast pulp lands are yet entirely undeveloped. Our coast is poorly lighted and charted; yachts are practically unable to visit us. Nothing is done with fresh-water pearls, mussels, kelp, and other possible sources of revenue.[1]

But it were perhaps unreasonable to expect that the subject of these pages should give up to poor, bleak, remote Labrador those talents and that industry which were meant for mankind.

NOTE TO CHAPTER VII

The first society formed in the United States for purposes hostile to Great Britain appears to have been the "Irish Republican Union."

The course of affairs in Ireland prevented the Irish Republican Union from carrying out any projects which it may have entertained and it was succeeded in 1855 by the "Massachusetts Irish Emigrant Society," which held its first convention in Boston on the 14th of August of that year, and under whose auspices secret societies were established in different parts of the United States.

These secret societies continued under different names, until, in 1859, they were reconstituted as the "Phœnix Society." The Civil War interrupted their progress, but in 1863 they again prominently appeared as the "Fenian Brotherhood" at a public meeting held at Chicago of that year.

A Congress of the Fenian Brotherhood met at

[1] Wilfred T. Grenfell, *Labrador.*

Philadelphia on the 17th of October, 1865, and resolved upon the issue of "Fenian Bonds," and the establishment of the Irish Republic at New York. The "Head Centre," as he was previously called, of the Brotherhood, was now styled "President of the Irish Republic"; the Executive Council entitled themselves "Senators," with a president; a house was hired at a rental of $1200; Secretaries of the Treasury, of War, etc., were appointed; and the Irish Republic was to be founded at New York. The bonds had been prepared for the Fenians by the "Continental Bank-Note Company, New York," and were stamped, "Office of the Secretary of Treasury." They were decorated with some emblems, and inscribed: "It is hereby certified that the Irish Republic is indebted to .....or bearer, in the sum of (ten) dollars, redeemable six months after the acknowledgment of the Independence of the Irish Nation, with interest from the date thereof inclusive at 6 per cent per annum, payable on presentation of this bond at the Treasury of the Irish Republic."

As a measure of precaution against the possible hostile incursions of Fenians which were being constantly threatened, the Canadian Government was compelled to call out for active service nine companies of the Provincial Militia in November, 1865, and to station them along the most exposed parts of the frontier.

CHAPTER VIII

TROUBLE IN THE NORTH-WEST

1869

THE annals of the British Empire are full of examples of political blundering. The transfer of Rupert's Land and the North-West Territory to the Dominion of Canada, if not a classic instance, exhibits some distinctive and entertaining features of its own.

Let us begin at the beginning: first, however, remarking that on the 1st of June, 1869, Chief Factor E. M. Hopkins formally retired and Mr. Smith succeeded him in the Montreal office of the Hudson's Bay Company.

Donald A. Smith to Colin Rankin

MONTREAL, July 1st, 1869.

This being Dominion Day, I am alone in the office and with little time for private correspondence. However, let me acknowledge with many thanks your kind favor of the 28th, and express regret that I shall be obliged for some days at least to defer my visit to Lindsay, as I shall have to set out this evening for Quebec to look after the cargo for the *Labrador* which has just arrived and will be starting in a few days for the Labrador coast and Hudson's Straits.

Your hearty assurance of support from the officers acting with me in the department is most encourag-

ing, and with such coöperation I shall be very hopeful of success.

It is very probable your presence will be required here shortly, and as in any case you are desirous of coming down when your accounts are closed, you had better come at once and we shall be able to talk over the matters to which you refer, before I set out on some little trips that it will be necessary for me to take almost immediately.

With best wishes and kindest regards for Mrs. Rankin and yourself, in which I am joined by my wife, in haste,

DON. A. SMITH.

The Dominion of Canada had been in existence two years. But as yet its western boundaries did not extend beyond Ontario. Many problems confronted the statesmen at the head of affairs. There was by no means that unity amongst the Provinces which was desirable; there was even disaffection in the East to be overcome. Yet there existed a party in the Cabinet and in the country who were for pressing on eagerly to the West, for carrying the young nation on to the shores of the Pacific. Whatever there then was of untimeliness, of tactlessness, even of fanaticism in the counsels of those men, history proves them to have been in the right. They were right in urging that there should be no delay. They were right in declaring that fields for enterprise would shortly be necessary; that to encourage and maintain the growing mercantile, manufacturing, and shipping interests of Canada a large increase in her agricultural popula-

tion was indispensable. They overlooked the border and perceived the example of the neighbouring Republic. The rapid development and settlement of the Western States constituted the greatest factor in the success of the American Union. They maintained that until it comprehended the whole territory from the Atlantic across the continent to the Pacific, it would not be complete. Already in the British North-America Act, provision had been made for the extension of the Dominion. "It shall be lawful," so ran the article, "for the Queen, by and with the advice of Her Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council, on an address from the Houses of Parliament of Canada, to admit Rupert's Land and the North-West Territory, or either of them, into the Union, on such terms and conditions in each case as are in the addresses expressed, and as the Queen thinks fit to approve, subject to the provisions of this Act."

Before the close of 1867, resolutions had been passed by the Canadian Parliament that the North-West territory should be transferred from Imperial to Canadian authority, but, declared the Honourable William McDougall in his speech supporting the resolutions, "if the Hudson's Bay Company make any claim to any portion of the soil occupied by their servants, they must come into the courts to make good their claim, and would be accorded the right, if the decision is adverse to them, of appeal to the Privy Council."

It was, however, hardly likely that the Company would consent to the transfer of the territory until

its demands had first been settled, more especially as Canada had virtually undertaken to purchase its rights. The Company appealed to the Duke of Buckingham, the new Secretary of State for the Colonies, who at once forwarded a despatch to the Governor-General, Lord Monck, informing him that the claims of the Company would first have to be settled before any transfer of its territory could be effected. He added that a Bill, based on the propositions of the Company, would be submitted to the Imperial Parliament.[1]

Sir John Macdonald and his colleagues were aware of the difficulties in the path and reluctant at this juncture to embark on any new enterprise.

"I am disclosing no secret of the Council Room," afterwards wrote McDougall to Joseph Howe, "when I inform you that in September, 1868, except Mr. Tilley and myself, every member of the Government was either indifferent or hostile to the acquisition of the North-West Territories." Albeit, when it was discovered that a ministerial crisis respecting the route of the Intercolonial Railway could only be avoided by securing the transfer of

[1] "With regard to the Hudson's Bay matter," wrote Sir George Cartier to Mr. Watkin under date of 15th of February, 1868, "not the least doubt that the speech of John A. [Macdonald] was very uncalled for and injudicious. He had no business to make such a speech, and I told him so at the time — that he ought not to have made it. However, you must not attach too much importance to that speech. I myself, and several of my colleagues, and John A. himself, have no intention to commit any spoliation; and for myself in particular I can say to you that I will never consent to be a party to a measure or anything intended to be an act of spoliation of the Hudson's Bay's rights and privileges." In this speech Sir John had alluded to the "Hudson's Bay bugbear of a claim."

these territories to the Dominion, the Ministry agreed to act. A deputation was appointed to proceed to England with full power to close negotiations for the purchase of one third of the North American continent. This deputation consisted of McDougall and Sir George Étienne Cartier. They arrived in London in October, 1868, and entered at once into negotiations with the Company. At the outset, the latter proposed to relinquish its rights of government and claims to the territory, reserving a royalty interest in the lands and mines, with certain reservations for hunting and trading purposes. Soon after the accession of Earl Granville to office, an agreement was reached, and arrangements for the transfer concluded on the 9th of March, 1869.

By this agreement the Hudson's Bay Company covenanted to receive £300,000 sterling on the surrender of their rights to the Imperial Government, which should, within one month from such transfer, re-transfer the same to Canada. The Company retained certain reservations of land in the vicinity of their forts and trading-posts, and were to have two sections in each surveyed township, or about one twentieth of the whole. The Imperial Government agreed to guarantee a loan of £300,000 sterling to pay the Hudson's Bay Company, and the Canadian Government undertook to respect the rights of the Indians and half-breeds in the territory transferred.

So far all was well. The successor of the Company's Governor, Dallas, who, in May, 1864, had

resigned office at Red River and gone to England, was Chief Factor William Mactavish, who had spent his life in the Company's service and was generally liked and respected by the people. There was no idea of reviving the office of Governor-in-Chief of Rupert's Land. Mactavish was Governor of Assiniboia and Acting Governor of the rest of the northern licensed territory. The whole of the Eastern department had been dissociated from his charge, and of this, as we have seen, Chief Factor Donald A. Smith came to be placed in control, with the title of General Manager. But, as I shall demonstrate presently, the character of this arrangement was not clearly understood by outsiders.

In 1869, the population of the district of Assiniboia, or as it was popularly called, the Red River Settlement, was between twelve and thirteen thousand souls, of whom about one half were French half-breeds, chiefly engaged in hunting, trapping, trading, and freighting. They were the most restless of the elements under the proposed change of administration. Because of the restrictions placed upon them they had never been very strongly attached to the Company; yet they were now far more disposed to remain under its sway than be dominated by English-speaking Canadians who, with them, enjoyed far less popularity than the citizens of the neighbouring Republic.

The village of Winnipeg, in the vicinity of Upper Fort Garry, was growing rapidly and now contained eight stores for trading with the settlers and

outfitting the half-breeds for the Indian trade. Occasionally when the fur-traders and hunters arrived from the interior, the vicinity presented a most animated appearance. Along the banks of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers settlements had spread, and there were many signs of comfort and prosperity. The settlers, as a rule, were peaceful and law-abiding, and certain disturbances which had occurred from time to time arose chiefly from the acts of a few men, and were not countenanced by the community at large.

At St. Boniface, on the opposite side of the Red River, was situated the cathedral and the residence of the Roman Catholic bishop of the diocese. Monseigneur Alexandre Taché was a prelate of unusual sagacity, ability, and enlightenment, who exerted a special influence upon his co-religionists throughout the whole of Rupert's Land and the far north. The most cordial relations subsisted between Bishop Taché and Governor Mactavish and the other Hudson's Bay officials. Nevertheless, for some time past, the Company's authority had been weakened in the country.[1]

There were many persons throughout Canada who were firmly convinced that the Roman Catholics of Quebec were plotting to make Assiniboia a French province. For fully two hundred years and more the French missionaries and trappers

[1] The political power of the Hudson's Bay Company, very weak in itself, and at no time sufficient to protect the community against the commission of crime, by a proper administration of the criminal laws, had received a great blow by the passing of the British North America Act itself. (*Lord Dufferin's Memorandum.*)

had traversed the North-West in every direction from the Great Lakes to the Rocky Mountains and doubtless beyond, and their acquaintance with the resources and possibilities of that territory was only equalled by that of the Hudson's Bay fur-traders. These latter, as we have seen, were never inclined to reveal their knowledge. There was, even in 1869, a redundant French population in Quebec seeking an outlet which they subsequently found in the New England States. Altogether the time was ripe for a large immigration from Quebec to Assiniboia, similar to that movement which has recently altered the racial character of the former English-speaking Eastern Townships of the older Province.

The Red River settlers, French and English, had begun to communicate freely with the outside world. Up to 1853 the postal service was represented by the semi-annual packets of the Company, one from York Factory in summer and the other in winter overland from Canada. In that year the monthly mail service was organized from Fort Garry to Fort Ripley, where it connected with the American postal system. A few years later the American Government having established the bi-weekly mail to Pembina, a post situated on the boundary line, the Red River authorities took advantage of the facilities thus afforded.

A more important step was in the direction of freedom of trade. In spite of every discouragement, Red River traders had managed to conduct business with Americans instead of depending en-

tirely on England via York Factory and Hudson's Bay. Seeing the impossibility of preventing it, the Company decided to profit by the transportation by water of supplies from St. Paul, in Minnesota. This was the beginning of that great line of communication with which, before many years had elapsed, Donald A. Smith was to be connected. The first steamer in 1859 proved so profitable that, in 1861, a second was placed on the Red River to ply between Fort Abercrombie in Minnesota and Fort Garry. In the following year the *International* appeared and was operated almost exclusively for the Company. As its agent at St. Paul, the Company appointed Mr. Norman W. Kittson, afterwards one of Mr. Smith's closest friends and railway colleagues.

I have thus glanced briefly at the external conditions and character of the Settlement of Assiniboia in the summer of 1869. There were disturbing factors in the life of the community. The protracted negotiations with the British and Canadian Governments only increased the unrest and added to the clouds already visible on the horizon.[1]

[1] "The present state of Government in the Red River Settlement," reported Governor Dallas, "is attributable alike to the habitual attempt encouraged, perhaps very naturally in England and in Canada, to discredit the tradition and question the title of the Hudson's Bay Company, and to the false economy which has stripped the Governor of a military force, with which, in the last resort, to support the decisions of the legal tribunals. No other organized government of white men in the world, since William Penn, has endeavored to rule any population, still less a promiscuous people composed of whites, half-breeds, Indians, and borderers, without a soldiery of some sort, and the inevitable result of the experiment has, in this case, been an unpunished case of prison-breaking, not

Chief among the disturbing factors, on the one hand, was the so-called "Canadian Party," led by a certain obstreperous Dr. John Schultz, a Titan in stature and energy. There was also the "American" or "Annexationist Party," whose spokesman was one Robinson, with the *farouche*, deformed figure of "Colonel" Enos Stutsman, and General Malmaros, the American Consul, lurking in the background. There was a "Red River Republican Party"; and there was, amongst the other plotters and recalcitrants, a certain W. B. O'Donahue, an unfrocked Fenian priest. The impending drama would assuredly not lack dynamic elements.

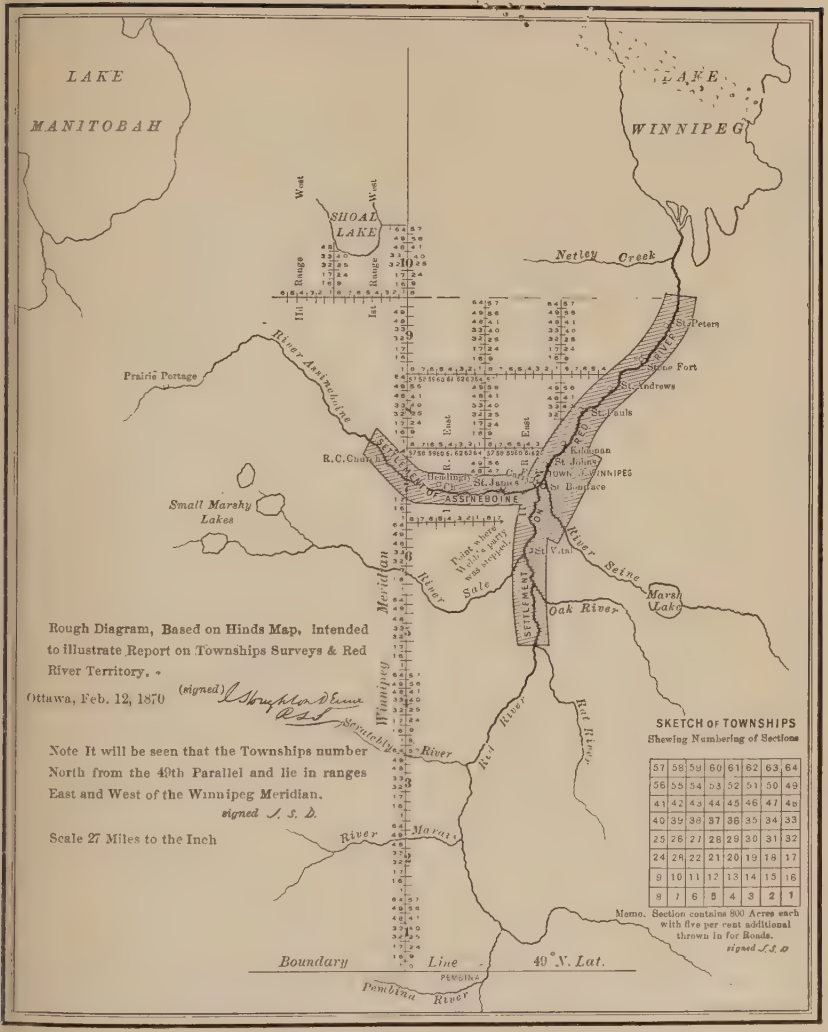
There were, moreover, two other important coteries or elements whose exasperated feelings must soon find a vent. One of these was composed of the officers of the fur-trade (not merely at Fort Garry, or in Assiniboia, but throughout the whole of Rupert's Land); the other was the half-breeds, *Metis* or *Bois-Brulés*, led by a young man, partially educated, of fiery and fanatical nature, in whose veins flowed a measure of Indian blood. His name was Louis Riel.

Riel, at an early age, had attracted the attention of Bishop Taché, who found him at the small college in St. Boniface earnestly studying Latin. In 1858 the Bishop obtained admission for the boy in the College of Montreal, where he was educated at the expense of a pious lady, Madame Masson,

sympathized in, it is true, by the majority of the settlers, but still tending to bring law and government into contempt, and greatly to discourage the governing body held responsible for keeping order in the territory."

Woods. In consequence of the peculiar views of the Premier, I was unwilling to proceed without another discussion with him, and a formal decision of the Government, but all present on the occasion, and you among them, authorized me to adopt the course I had indicated, and to proceed departmentally. That very afternoon I telegraphed Colonel Dennis, a gentleman whose professional skill and energetic character I know would be everywhere admitted, and offered him the position of superintendent of the work. He promptly visited Ottawa, received his instructions from me, conferred with the other Ministers, and proceeded to the North-West.

Although the Manitoba half-breeds were in a sulky, suspicious humour, threatening trouble, nothing was done to placate them or even to consider their susceptibilities. A surveyor named Snow, with his staff, had already gone forward under McDougall's orders to survey a route recommended by the engineer, S. J. Dawson, notwithstanding the fact that Canada had as yet no legal right or title in the Territory. In July, 1869, came Colonel Dennis to Red River to begin his appointed task of laying out townships and making a general survey of the country. It is only fair to Dennis to state that after consulting the Crown Lands Department, he submitted a memorandum on the subject, in which he intimated that there would probably be objection on the part of the half-breeds to any survey until their claims had been investigated and settled by the Dominion Government. Unhappily, no attention was paid to this warning; the Ministry


LAKE MANITOBAH
LAKE WINNIPEG
SHOAL LAKE
Netley Creek
Prairie Portage
River Assiniboine
Small Marshy Lakes
R.C.Church
SETTLEMENT OF ASSINEBOINE
Point where Wells's party was stopped.
St. Peters
Stone Fort
St. Andrews
St. Pauls
Kildonan
St. Johns
TOWN OF WINNIPEG
St. Boniface
St. Vital
River Seine
Marsh Lake
Oak River
Red River
Rat River
Sale River
Winnipeg Meridian
Scratchley River
River Marais
Boundary Line 49° N. Lat.
PEMBINA
Pembina River
Rough Diagram, Based on Hinds Map, intended to illustrate Report on Townships Surveys & Red River Territory.
Ottawa, Feb. 12, 1870
(signed)
Note It will be seen that the Townships number North from the 49th Parallel and lie in ranges East and West of the Winnipeg Meridian.
signed J. S. D.
Scale 27 Miles to the Inch
SKETCH OF TOWNSHIPS
Shewing Numbering of Sections
57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64
56 55 54 53 52 51 50 49
41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48
40 39 38 37 36 35 34 33
25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32
24 23 22 21 20 19 18 17
9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16
8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
Memo. Section contains 800 Acres each with five per cent additional thrown in for Roads.
signed J. S. D.

issued an order for the surveys to proceed. Colonel Dennis accordingly went to work to carry out his instructions.[1]

While all this was proceeding in the North-West, on the other side of the Atlantic, early in August, 1869, the preliminaries of the transfer had been settled, save and except payment of the stipulated sum of £300,000 to the Company. Lord Granville wrote to Canada's newly appointed Governor-General: —

Lord Granville to Sir John Young

DOWNING STREET, 11th August, 1869.

I transmit here for your information, a copy of the draft Deed of Surrender, and also of the Rupert's Land

[1] On the 4th of September Governor Mactavish wrote to Bishop Taché, who was then absent in Montreal: —

"I have had a more than ordinarily busy summer, with rather above the average of *contretemps* in the way of business. Besides this, you no doubt have heard that there had been and is still, a good deal of agitation here. Unfortunately every Canadian official as he comes in falls into Dr. Schultz's hands, and evidently continues in good accord with him. Our friends the half-breeds shrewdly suspect that no good can come to them from such an alliance, and are in consequence rapidly becoming more decidedly opposed to Canada. If the Honourable William McDougall, when he comes here, shows the same leaning, there will be trouble here; and in any case in the interest of your people, I will take the liberty to say that I think it would be of the utmost importance to them, as well as to all concerned, that you should be here when the new order of things is instituted.

"Your other duties may render this impossible, but, if so, it is much to be regretted, as taken in time you could control matters which afterwards it would not be so easy to manage. We had, as you well know, our times of excitement, but I have never seen the people here in the restless excited state they are now. None of them I have spoken with can give a clear account of what they wish, but very clearly show that they are suspicious that no good to them is intended."

Loan Guarantee Bill, which has just received Her Majesty's assent and become law.

I shall be glad to learn from you, at your earliest convenience, whether any arrangement has been made for the payment of the £300,000, as this is the only point now remaining to be settled before the Order-in-Council can be issued.

About a fortnight later (the 20th), Sir John Macdonald issued authority for the payment of the purchase money forthwith out of the funds in the hands of the Honourable John Rose, the Canadian agent in London. The Imperial Government as well as the Company were seemingly anxious that there should not be any delay in making the transfer at the stipulated time. Late in September, Sir Curtis Lampson, Deputy-Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, penned the following to the Honourable William McDougall.

Sir Curtis Lampson to W. McDougall

25th September, 1869.

My dear Mr. McDougall: —

I received here yesterday your kind favour of the 7th inst. I was glad to hear that you had consented to take charge of Rupert's Land for a time. We have received notice from the Colonial Department that the transfer will take place on 1st of December, in accordance with the wishes expressed by the Canadian Government.

Perhaps Mr. Mactavish's action with reference to the settlers at Muskrat Creek has been misrepresented. Your letter, with the enclosure, shall go before our

Board when we meet in October, and you shall have all the information in our possession, as to the arrangements between Lord Selkirk and the Indians. You may rest satisfied that everything will be done, in the power of the Hudson's Bay Company, to aid you in the management of the Indians. Our interests are identical, and our views and wishes will be made known to all our agents in the Hudson's Bay Territory. Very sincerely yours,

C. M. LAMPSON.[1]

In fact, as we shall see, everybody was thought of and written to; everybody was complimented, everybody was placated, except Governor Mactavish, the little army of wintering partners in Rupert's Land, and the half-breed residents.

The "Canadian Party" at Red River looked upon Colonel Dennis as a necessary instrument in the attainment of their cherished hopes. For them he would snatch the chestnuts out of the fire. Success being apparently in sight an orgy of land-grabbing set in. Absurd as it must be to a philosopher, monstrous as it has appeared to many social reformers, there is no species of human cupidity so contagious. "Carpet-baggers" from Britain, Canada, and America began to arrive, and cast their eyes about for the fairest and most convenient portions of the Territory where they might "stake a claim," avoiding only what was notoriously the enclosed property of the old settlers. Many of these

[1] This letter, sent under cover to Governor Mactavish at Fort Garry, did not reach McDougall until the 20th of November, when it was forwarded from Fort Garry. The reason for the delay will soon become apparent.

land-hungry strangers were suspiciously familiar with the quaint formulæ by which land is appropriated by American speculating pioneers. They cut a furrow around a parcel of land with a plough and then drove stakes at intervals in the ground inscribed with the claimant's name. "T. Jones — his section; trespassers will be shot!" was a typical legend. Hundreds of acres in this manner were staked off on the site of the present city of Winnipeg. Schultz, the leader of the Canadian Party, was by no means backward in a zealous acquisitiveness. So large a tract was embraced by his furrow and indicated by his stakes that had his expectations been realized, it was said that "he would have died one of the wealthiest landed proprietors in the Dominion of Canada!" No wonder the Company's officers, the old settlers and natives, as well as the half-breeds, viewed these high-handed proceedings with dismay. If the land did not still belong in fee-simple to the Hudson's Bay Company, if it was to be transferred to invading "carpet-baggers," and their own prior claims utterly set at naught, they had been scarcely human not to have resented the whole proceeding as unjust and intolerable.

If any title was to be granted at all to individuals in the territory those who had been born and bred there should surely be given priority. Such an equitable policy was not contemplated, and the very manner in which the confiscation was begun was itself an offence.

Not long was Colonel Dennis in perceiving that

his previous diagnosis of the temper of the people whose countryside he had invaded was sound enough. On the 21st of August, 1869, he reported to Ottawa: —

I find that a considerable degree of irritation exists among the native population in view of the surveys and settlements being made without the Indian title having first been extinguished. In connection therewith, I would reiterate to you my conviction, as expressed while at Ottawa, that no time should be lost. The necessity for prompt action is more apparent to me now than it seemed even then. . . . In the mean time, the French half-breeds, who constitute about one fourth or one fifth (say 3000 souls) of the settlements, are likely to prove a turbulent element. This class has gone so far as to threaten violence should surveys be attempted to be made.

A week later he wrote again to his departmental chief: —

I have again to remark the uneasy feeling which exists in the half-breed and Indian element, with regard to what they conceive to be premature action taken by the Government in proceeding to effect a survey of the lands, without having extinguished the Indian title, and I beg permission to reiterate the conviction, expressed on a former occasion, that this must be the first question of importance dealt with by the Government.

To this, the amazing reply of the Government was to "proceed with the surveys on the plan proposed." The surveyors accordingly persisted; threatening crowds gathered about them; feet were

planted on the chains, and it only needed a spark to produce an explosion. Here was a juncture for any one with knowledge, authority, and a sense of justice to step forward and explain to the people the really benevolent intentions of the Canadian Government.[1] The fears of one faction at least could then have been dissipated at a word. Their indignation would have vanished; and their loyalty secured without a penny of expense. The method was simply to assure the entire community that none would be cheated of his claims or deprived of his just rights and that birth and lengthy residence in the country would give precedence. Had this assurance been proclaimed, the insurrection at Red River had perished at its birth.

It may be urged that the Hudson's Bay officers and ex-officers, the old settlers, and the sons of settlers, the men who had borne the heat and burden of the day, who had suffered privations and toiled long in the wilderness that a parcel of London stockholders might wax fat — would still have been aggrieved. But they would not have revolted. If ever an official pacificator was to appear, the time was ripe. Absurd rumours flew from mouth to mouth among the French-speaking inhabitants. It was said and believed, for instance, "that plots of ground, where some of them had dwelt and reared families for fifty years, would be torn from

[1] The eminent counsel, Mr. J. S. Ewart, K.C., has put it plainly enough when he says that at this time "the Canadian Government had no more right to exercise jurisdiction at Red River than the President of the United States." (*The Manitoba School Question.* 1896.)

their possession by the Government of Canada, and themselves cast adrift; their rights to the soil would be invaded, their houses taken from them, enormous taxes would be levied, and the most absolute tyranny forced upon them. They would be bought and sold like slaves." With these notions in general currency, we cannot wonder at the popularity of the movement to resist Canadian "coercion" to the death.

On the horizon a distinguished candidate for the rôle of pacificator appeared. At the end of September the Honourable Joseph Howe, Secretary of State for the Provinces, visited Montreal and had an interview with Mr. Donald Alexander Smith at the Hudson's Bay Company's office. He expressed his intention to undertake a "holiday journey" to Red River in order to see for himself the conditions prevailing there. Howe was one of the outstanding figures in contemporary Canadian history. To a cultivated mind and a masculine judgment there was added the gift of fluent and sonorous oratory. He was in the best sense a patriot; but he was secretly a pessimist about the North-West. "If people tell me," he said on one occasion, "that the Sahara is fertile and the Dead Sea capable of yielding magnificent trout, my mind is elastic enough to conceive the scientific possibilities, but I should reserve my time, my interest, and my money for more immediately practical matters." Not alone was Howe amongst the statesmen of the day, or even amongst the dwellers in Rupert's Land itself, to discount the probability of that terri-

tory ever conferring any solid advantage upon the Dominion. Nevertheless, he felt it incumbent upon him, as a Minister and the Secretary of State for the Provinces, to visit now the distant territory which his Government, in a somewhat unorthodox and arbitrary fashion, was about to annex.

While Howe was travelling toward Red River, in England the negotiations had reached their climax between the Government and the Company. It was there announced that the 1st of October, 1869, would be the date for the purchase money to be paid and the transfer to Canada effected. To the Honourable William McDougall was awarded the prize he sought: he was appointed Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Territories, the appointment to take effect from and after the date on which such territories were transferred by Her Majesty to the Dominion. Howe having addressed a formal letter to McDougall, instructing him to proceed with all convenient speed to Fort Garry, to superintend the preliminary arrangements for the organization of the territories, and report to the Government at Ottawa, accompanied his fellow-minister as far as Thunder Bay and then left him. He continued his journey with a friend to St. Paul, and by the first week of October was at Red River. He spent a fortnight at Fort Garry. The result of his observations was to convince him that an egregious official blunder had been committed. More than ever he regretted that the Government had ever attempted to hasten matters in the North-West. He expressed to Governor

Mactavish his genuine personal regret at the turn affairs had taken. Mactavish, already seriously unwell, resentful as he was at the conduct of the Canadian Government, made no secret of the fact that still greater was his resentment at the treatment to which he and the other wintering partners had been subjected by the London directorate of the Company.

Before blame is cast upon the officers of the Hudson's Bay Company for not espousing the cause and defending the action of the Canadian Government, we must remember how that government had ignored them.[1] We must recall the high-handed and unjust policy towards them of the other party to their threatened undoing, the London Board. Could any one with knowledge of human nature expect that they would feel any particular loyalty or respect for a newly constituted body of British and American speculators, who, having acquired all the ancient rights and concessions of the Hudson's Bay Company, now proceeded to deal with the wintering partners as if they were ordinary employees, without any claim upon the concern save for their dividends and pensions?

The Hudson's Bay officials residing in the territory [wrote Colonel Garnet (afterwards Lord) Wolseley] were loud-spoken in denouncing the bargain entered into by their Directors in London; they said it in-

[1] No wonder Governor Mactavish was ready to welcome annexation to the United States. "Indeed," he wrote to the Secretary of the Company, "it is for the interest of settlers here that annexation should take place at once."

jured them materially, without providing any compensation for the loss they were about to sustain; that they, the working bees of the hive, were to receive nothing, whilst the drones of stockholders in England were to get all the honey in the shape of the £300,000.

The English-speaking farmers, although thoroughly loyal, and anxious for annexation to Canada, so as to be delivered from what many called the "thraldom of the Hudson's Bay Company," regarded the terms of the transfer in no favourable light. They thought that they should have been consulted; and the injudicious silence of the Canadian Ministry with reference to the form of government to be established, caused many divisions amongst this party. Although they would have scorned to take part in any actual resistance against the new order of things, yet they were by no means sorry to see the Ottawa Ministry in difficulties. They considered themselves slighted and were sulky in consequence. They had no intention of giving themselves any trouble to aid a Government that had not only failed to consult, or to consider their interests, but had ignored their existence altogether.

With the exception, therefore, of the small handful of Canadian adventurers already alluded to, no one residing in the settlement in 1869 was pleased with the arrangements, and many were loud-spoken in denouncing them. Where such active elements of discontent existed, it may be easily imagined how simple it was to fan the smouldering embers into a flame of active rebellion.[1]

This puts the whole case in a nutshell. What course, then, should Howe have pursued? He was the representative of, he was, *ad hoc*, the Cana-

[1] *Blackwood's Magazine*, 1871.

dian Government. Had it been possible, he should boldly have postponed the completion of the bargain and have advised his colleagues in Ottawa to meddle no further in the affairs of the North-West until the country was appeased and all sections had become unanimous for inclusion within the Confederation.[1] But was such a course politically possible? Whatever Howe's private feelings, it was now too late for him as a politician to take any arresting action. McDougall was at his heels, a man proud and sensitive, with his *idée fixe*, hugging to his bosom a darling dream of glory. Smile as one may now at the spectacle, in sober truth William McDougall was of the stuff of which great national heroes have been and will again be made. But for the uncalculated and cruel chance, this earnest, ardent champion of a wider nationhood would today be acclaimed in history as the Father of the Canadian West and his statue rise benignantly from the centre of its teeming metropolis. It was not to be.

McDougall was at Howe's heels: there was no possibility of telegraphing to Ottawa: McDougall could not be recalled. Wherefore, under the circumstances, it was incumbent upon the visiting minister to prepare the way for him.

[1] "Howe's opposition to Confederation in Nova Scotia," remarks Professor Chester Martin, "was not unknown at Red River. Whatever the apparent ignorance of Canadian policy, there seems to have been an understanding of Canadian politics." (*Canada and its Provinces.*)

J. Howe to Sir John Macdonald

WINNIPEG, FORT GARRY,
October 10th, 1869.

MY DEAR SIR JOHN: —

I have been here a week, and shall leave for home in three or four days. I shall probably meet McDougall on the way, and will give him the benefit of my observations. For many reasons, which I will explain when we meet, my visit here has been opportune and useful. Any amount of absurd rumours were afloat when I came, and a good deal of strong prejudice has been excited. Some fools wanted to get up addresses, and have me speak at a public meeting.

This I declined; but by frank and courteous explanations to leading men, who largely represent the resident population, I have cleared the air a good deal, and I have done my best to give McDougall a fair start. All will now depend on his tact, temper, and discretion.

Believe me,

Yours ever,

JOSEPH HOWE.

Who were the "fools" who pressed Howe to speak at a public meeting? Dr. Schultz and the leaders of the Canadian Party? But if Howe wisely declined to ally himself with Schultz, at least he might have addressed himself directly to the malcontents, to the settlers and pioneers and the ignorant half-breeds. He might surely have uttered a word of explanation and conciliation to the people about to come under the rule of his Government; he might indignantly have repudiated

the current suggestion that the inhabitants were being "bought and sold like so many cattle"; he might have declared the benevolent intentions of Canada and appeased the settlers by a promise of generous treatment in the matter of lands. Howe was an orator, and at the thunders of his eloquence, the whole agitation might have died quietly away. What Howe did cannot, unhappily, be concealed.

Mr. Bannatyne [Postmaster and a member of Council at Winnipeg] stated to me on several occasions, between the 6th and 20th November, while I was at Fort Garry, that Mr. Howe told him that he [Howe] approved of the course of the half-breeds, and if they held out they would get all they wished for from the Canadian Government. That he [Howe] had held very little intercourse while there with that party calling itself the "Canadian Party," for he firmly believed that Schultz, Mair, and Bown, with his *Nor'-Wester*, had acted in a very unbecoming manner toward the half-breeds, and he only wondered how these men were tolerated in the Settlement. And further that when he took his place in Parliament, he would certainly do his best for the half-breeds. Mr. Bannatyne put great stress upon the latter expression, and told me that Howe and the Lower Canadians would make a big fight against Upper Canadians not to have any coercion used in the Settlement. Mr. Howe further told him that the Settlement would prosper if left to govern itself.

Mr. Howe also told Mr. Bannatyne that Mr. MacDougall was unpopular in Canada, and hinted at the probability that he would make himself so if allowed to govern Red River. Mr. McKenny [Sheriff] told me

that Mr. Howe made himself very popular while at Red River, and he believed, if they wanted a Canadian Governor there at all, they would have accepted him; but the time for Canada to rule their country was past, that their natural outlet was through the United States. That no Canadian Government could be established permanently in the Settlement. Mr. McKenny also confirmed Bannatyne's statement that Mr. Howe told him he had no doubt of the success of the half-breeds if they were firm and held out.

Mr. McKenny also laid great weight on the action that Mr. Howe would take in the Canadian Parliament, assisted by Lower Canadians.[1]

Attempts were subsequently made by Howe and his friends to repudiate such testimony as this.

In a public statement delivered months later Howe declared, —

It has been said, "Oh, Howe stirred up the insurrection and raised the trouble in the North-West, and was the cause of having McDougall barred out." An explanation is very simple. . . . At Fort Garry I received three invitations to take up my quarters — one from Governor Mactavish, one from Dr. Schultz, and another from the Bishop of Rupert's Land. But I preferred to go to the hotel, and be at liberty to see every one and learn what I could. Here I have been accused of uttering all sorts of treason in some mysterious way. That was simply impossible. There was but one parlor in the hotel, shared by Mr. Turner and Mr. Sandford with myself. People were coming, and going, and I could have had but little private conver-

[1] Report of Major James Wallace on his return to Pembina from Fort Garry.

sation, nine out of ten times these two gentlemen being present when I was in company with any one, and hearing every word I spoke. What I said might have been said on the street. I believed it my first duty to call on Governor Mactavish, but I found he had been attacked with hemorrhage of the lungs. I then addressed myself to get such information as I could; went to the Seminary of St. Boniface, visited their schools, and generally put myself in communication with the leading men as far as I could ascertain them.

But the fact of Howe's predilections was too notorious to be explained away. There was even a certain avowed republican in the settlement, Robert O'Lone, who derived comfort from Howe's words. To Major Wallace afterwards, this man "spoke highly of Howe, and said he was as much a republican as he was, and he knew he would not wish to force that settlement into subjection to Canada — that he was a very liberal-minded man." He also corroborated the statements made by many others that Howe, along with most of the Lower Canadian members, would range themselves in the Canadian Parliament on the side of the Red River people, and that through his eloquence and with the precedent of Nova Scotia before them, he had no doubt but they would be left to themselves, for the concession they would ask would not be granted by the Canadian Government. But we have Howe's own testimony as to his forebodings in a letter written on October 30: —

My visit to Red River has utterly cured me of any lingering hope I may have had of a peaceable transfer. The only thing we can do now is to minimize the extent of the mischief. Trouble is bound to come either before or after and if it were not for Mr. McDougall and the extent to which we have pledged ourselves, I would say let us keep our hands out of this Manitoba business into which we have been hurried and which promises to jeopardize our Government and the interests of the Country. It will be hard to pull out now, but if we see a chance of it, we must do it. This country is not necessary to us, and at this stage it will only be a drag upon our energies and resources.[1]

Thus Howe returned with his worst fears confirmed. He had seen little or nothing to upset his previously formed opinion of the utter impracticability of converting the Rupert's Land population into a peaceful and profitable agricultural community. He had seen much to make him certain that the people of Red River would not accept annexation by Canada without remonstrance.

But not a hint of this should escape him. It was necessary to let McDougall go in; conceivably, too, matters might turn out better than he expected. He started on the 20th of October on his return journey to St. Paul and actually passed McDougall on the way. The episode is indeed a strange one. These two eminent statesmen, personal friends and lately official colleagues, passed each other on the prairie, hundreds of miles from civilization, and scarcely spoke to one another. So great was the

[1] Howe to Edward O'Brien.

change that had come over Howe's mind and temper, no wonder McDougall was "surprised and pained"! In view of this altered demeanour on the part of his late colleague and of the task before him he may well have felt misgivings. Some months later Howe endeavoured to explain his singular conduct. He had, he publicly avowed, discovered the great blunder which had been made in leaving the Company's officers out of the bargain.

These men have large interests in the territory and in the property of the Company, and there was a feeling of dissatisfaction among them. I have every reason to believe that there was a feeling of great uneasiness among the resident employees of the Hudson's Bay Company or among a very large portion of them, and I believe that they thought the directors and managers in London, to whom the £300,000 was to be given, would divide it among themselves exclusively, which they feared would work great wrong to them; for some of the men — I am not prepared to say how many — believed that they had fair and just claims to a portion of the purchase money. . . . I must say that Governor Mactavish met me in the most friendly way, and placed in my hands the records of the old Council of that country, and these I studied for two days. I procured and brought home, for the use of the Minister of Justice, a copy of the laws as they existed in that territory, that the Government might know the laws to which the people were accustomed. I also obtained a list of names of old councillors, too, that the Government might know in making appointments how to select men of experience in whom confidence had been reposed already. I discharged my trust faithfully and

honourably, and did all any man could to quiet the difficulties.

I met Mr. McDougall in the open prairie, when a cold north-east wind was blowing. Fortunately I was travelling with the wind on my back, but the honourable member for North Lanark had the wind in his face; as, with his family of children, he travelled, he had to face the storm. If honourable gentlemen had been on the open prairie that bitter morning, I think they would not have been exceedingly anxious to hold communication with any one; and when there were women and children concerned, it would have been barbarous to have stopped the cavalcade. Therefore, we merely exchanged a few greetings and passed on. Now, looking back at all that I have done, I am not conscious that we could have made it much better if we had stopped for an hour or two and held consultation.

"Howe knew," said McDougall long afterwards "that he had done me an ill-turn and was ashamed to meet me." Nevertheless, on Howe's arrival at St. Paul he was conscious that something was required of him under the circumstances, and he penned the following: —

Joseph Howe to William McDougall

St. Paul, October 31st, 1869.

My dear McDougall, —

I got here yesterday at noon, and go east to-morrow morning. I was sorry not to have an hour's chat with you, but what I had to say lies so obviously on the surface, that your own judgment will guide you correctly even if it is unsaid.

I found a good deal of misapprehension and prejudice afloat and did my best to dissipate it. Schultz, with a very indifferent private character, had been assuming an absurd position as the representative and confidential agent of the Canadian Government, and Mair had provoked a great deal of hostility by some foolish letters which he had published. I disclaimed any connection with either, and kept Schultz at arm's length. It would be a great mistake to patronize a little clique of persons at war with the more influential elements of society.

These are sufficiently mixed and heterogeneous to require delicate handling, but they must form the basis of any successful government, and if dealt with fairly, courteously, and justly, I have no doubt can be organized and utilized till the foundation is widened by immigration.

I hope that Mactavish, who is much respected, will take a seat in Council and give you cordial support.

The half-breeds are a peculiar people, like our fishermen and lumbermen, but they do a large amount of the rough work of the country which nobody else can do so well. I hope the priests will counsel them wisely and that you may be able to draw in some of their leaders to coöperate in the business of government.

With the English population there will be no difficulty, if we except two or three American traders who are annexationists.

The Indian question was not presented to me in any form, as I saw none of their chiefs, but they repudiate the idea of being held to the Company, and some form of treaty or arrangement may be necessary. Anything will be better than an Indian war, at that distance from the centre.

You may rely upon our cordial coöperation. I have a keen insight into the difficulties before you and will do my best to make your mission a success.

Believe me, yours truly,

J. Howe.[1]

Howe confesses that Schultz, "with a very indifferent private character, had been assuming an absurd position," and that he kept him at "arm's length." The truth is, as a politician he dared not interfere; he dared not repudiate Schultz and the Canadian Party, because of the weapon which such conduct on his part would have placed in the hands of the Opposition, especially in Ontario. He felt constrained to let McDougall, Schultz, and the others go their own way and himself preserve a tactful silence about his visit to Red River.

On the day before Howe had written the foregoing letter, McDougall arrived at the Hudson's Bay post of Pembina. This post, now known as Emerson, is situated on the Canadian side of the international boundary about sixty miles south of Fort Garry. Scarcely had the Secretary of State taken his departure from Red River when the half-breed leader, Louis Riel, with a handful of followers, marched southward to the border and erected a barrier across the road at Rivière Sale to obstruct the entrance of the incoming Canadian Governor. At various public and private meetings held among the French, Riel had taken a prominent part, and now he assembled three or four hundred men at Rivière Sale with the avowed object of denying

[1] McDougall MSS.

McDougall any admission to the territory. A Council was formed, of which one John Bruce was chosen president, with Riel as secretary, the council chamber being at Rivière Sale, in the house of a priest named Ritchot. A messenger was sent forward to intercept Mr. McDougall and deliver the following "official" warning previously prepared: —

MONSIEUR: — Le Comité National des Métis de la Rivière Rouge, intime à Monsieur W. MacDougall l'ordre de ne pas entrer sur Le Territoire du Nord-Ouest sans une permission spéciale de ce comité.

Par ordre du President,
JOHN BRUCE.

LOUIS RIEL, *Secrétaire.*

Daté à St. Norbert, Rivière Rouge,
Ce 21² jour d'octobre, 1869.

On the very day (October 30, 1869) McDougall arrived at the boundary line, Governor Mactavish addressed the following letter of counsel to his appointed successor.

Governor Mactavish to the Honourable William McDougall, C.B.

MY DEAR SIR: —

It is with much concern I have to say, that among a certain portion of the half-breed population here, there prevails a degree of excitement at the prospect of your arrival in the country, which seems to make it necessary that in coming into the Settlement, you should use great circumspection; and it is for the purpose of pointing attention to that apparent necessity that I send you this communication.

For some weeks past, rumours have been reaching me, through more or less reliable channels, of dissatisfaction among the French half-breeds with the recent arrangements; but believing, as I then did, that these feelings had no very deep root, I indulged in the hope that they might pass away. But in this respect, I am deeply pained to say I have been disappointed, and that within the last few days the feeling of discontent had manifested itself in such a manner as to create serious apprehension for the result. After interfering with the surveying operations of Colonel Dennis, these people, in considerable number, have combined for the avowed purpose of stopping your entrance into the Settlement, and with that view they have actually taken up permanent positions on the road by which, in the usual course of travel, you would advance.

Mactavish then went on to suggest three courses for meeting the difficulty which had arisen: —

The first is, that there happily being among even the French half-breeds a considerable element of well-disposed persons, there should be carefully selected from that section a body of from twenty to thirty men, who, mounted and armed, should proceed to Pembina and escort you entirely clear from the roads on which the malcontents are known to have taken up positions.

The second is, that of making a public call upon the whole loyal portion of the settlement to turn out in the cause of order, and to the number of say three hundred unarmed, able-bodied men, if such force could be mustered, proceed to Pembina and escort you into the Settlement, by the usual route, whether the malcontents remain upon it or not.

And the third is, that you should remain at Pem-

bina and await the issue of conciliatory negotiations, with the view to procuring a peaceable disposition of the malcontents.

Mr. McDougall's secretary, Mr. Provencher,[1] who had been despatched to Fort Garry with a message to Governor Mactavish, was promptly stopped at the barrier, by the French and turned back to Pembina. A Captain Cameron (Hon. Mr. Tupper's son-in-law), who accompanied McDougall's party in the capacity of military adviser, also attempted during the next few days to gain entrance to the Settlement. He, too, was ejected, a guard of twenty-five or thirty men accompanying both officials to the boundary line. The exploits of this zealous squad, commanded by a French half-breed named Lépine, were not yet over. They now had the audacity to conduct Mr. McDougall and party, from the Hudson's Bay Company's post at Pembina where they had taken refuge, into the adjacent American hamlet of the same name, warning them not again to enter the Settlement on pain of death. In the nick of time, the surveyor, Colonel Dennis, appeared upon the scene and by his exertions spared his discomfited chief from sleeping houseless that night on the prairie. At the farm of one La Rose, subject to much inconvenience, suffering many deprivations and exposed to the derision of vulgar frontiersmen, McDougall, his family and suite, took up their quarters and impatiently awaited the issue of events. On December 1, the

[1] A nephew of the first Bishop of Red River.

act of transfer would, of course, go into legal effect and Riel and his followers would not dare defy the majesty of the law.[1] Days drifted into weeks; the Honourable William McDougall was still at Pembina.

When Donald Alexander Smith arrived in Montreal on his return that summer from England, he found a mass of detail connected with his new office awaiting consideration. He plunged into this with his accustomed industry. But very shortly was he made aware that matters were in a parlous state in the North-West. Personal letters from Red River, as well as despatches in the newspapers, apprised him of the inevitable consequences of Colonel Dennis's surveying operations. True, Red River was a couple of thousand miles away; it was in

[1] "Though a man of undoubted ability in many ways, he [McDougall] was both by training and temperament very ill-fitted to deal with such a situation. The half-breeds had their legitimate grievances, and it was eminently a case for negotiation and conciliation and not for standing on the strict legal rights of the case. Mr. McDougall was essentially a parliamentarian and a debater and not of a very conciliatory disposition. Unluckily, too, he was not a *persona grata* to that very influential body, the Roman Catholic Church, who were perhaps the only persons who could have mediated successfully with the half-breeds at that moment. It was unfortunate, too, that Mr. McDougall, though he was one of the few prominent men of that day who really appreciated the vast possibilities of the North-West, and though he had done very good service in securing the transfer of that territory from the Hudson's Bay Company to Canada, had also a very high sense of his own importance and authority as Lieutenant-Governor. When he found himself literally barred out of his new dominion by men whom he rather despised as semi-savages, he seemed to have lost his head and to have openly or tacitly sanctioned some of the hotter of his partisans in the settlement to have recourse to force. This was the signal for an explosion." (Sir R. Cartwright, *Reminiscences.*)

Governor Mactavish's territory and entirely outside the official scope of the General Manager in Montreal. But as he expressed it in a letter to a friend, one of the members of the Board: —

> We in the East, as well as those in the Far West, cannot shut our eyes to the fact that we are all of us, every factor, trader, and clerk, directly involved in this issue. The Company is a single body and Red River lies at its heart. If Mr. Mactavish were enjoying good health and able to put forth all his vigour, the case would be far less serious; but from all accounts he finds it a double strain to cope with the situation.

Mr. Smith suspected that the Governor of Rupert's Land was beginning to entertain a little jealousy towards himself. In his later communications to Mr. Mactavish, the Secretary of the London Office of the Hudson's Bay Company had made more than one allusion to Mr. Smith, as if intimating that the counsels of the Montreal manager might not be without utility. It was already being put about amongst the commissioned officers that Chief Factor Smith was the "destined chief of the fur-trade." The natural irritability of an invalid was incensed at the suggestion. In a visit which Mactavish made to Montreal that summer I cannot find that these two officials even met. A letter, couched in the most guarded and respectful terms, which Mr. Smith addressed to the Governor requiring information for the benefit of political enquirers in Canada, drew forth a brief and formal reply.

It has already been intimated in these pages that the whole situation of the Company's government and operations and its relations to the people of Canada had recently undergone a definite and almost a dramatic change. The causes were two-fold. The first was the revolution within the Company itself, due to its acquisition, in 1863, by the International Financial Society, a proceeding which filled the wintering partners with mingled resentment and alarm; the second was the impending "transfer" of Rupert's Land to Canada. One result of this latter measure would be to shift the centre of the Company's authority, influence, and commercial activity from Fort Garry to Montreal. The Company having no diplomatic agent at Ottawa, naturally its chief executive officer in that department would be regarded as acting in that capacity. In Sir George Simpson's time, nearly a decade before, the seat and centre of the Company's government was where he happened for the time to reside. As this had generally been Montreal (Lachine), many otherwise well-informed persons, even Sir John Macdonald himself, who frequently had had occasion to consult the old autocrat of the fur-trade, took it for granted, before the Western troubles grew acute, and without enquiring very closely into Mr. Smith's credentials or antecedents, that he was Simpson's authentic official successor.

We may pause for a moment to remark upon the little that was known, by the Canadian people at large, half a century ago, of the operations and *personnel* of the great fur-trading monopoly. Not-

withstanding the report of the Parliamentary Commission of 1857, despite the various petitions to the Legislature, and the continued agitation in Upper Canada and in the Red River Settlement itself, an air of mystery still enveloped the whole British North American fur-trade. The newspapers of that day did little or nothing to enlighten the public, for the simple reason that they were ignorant themselves. The most absurd and extravagant legends were current. Both John McLean and R. M. Ballantyne had written books which gave a true and even a vivid picture of life in the Company's service, viewed from within; yet strange as it may seem, these books appear to have been unread in Canada. The former author, indeed, although his narrative was actually composed in Guelph, in the Province of Upper Canada, complained that he had never met any one in Toronto who had ever even heard of it!

To the popular imagination the officers of the fur-trade dwelt during their active life within fortified stockades, either on the shore of Hudson's Bay or in the vast and desolate wilderness of the West, known on the map as Rupert's Land, to which forts hordes of painted savages, intimidated by a show of authority and a few pieces of ancient artillery, periodically brought their canoe cargoes of costly furs. In exchange for this product of their skill as hunters and trappers, the white traders doled out muskrats, red and yellow blankets and capots, ammunition, axes, steel traps, tobacco, glass beads, and various trumpery, commonly taking thereby

an unfair advantage of the red man's folly, ignorance, and helplessness. So ran the legend. The ethics of this system of commerce, it may be added, aroused far less indignation than the fact of its being a chartered monopoly.

That there lay a large territory to the east in which the Hudson's Bay Company conducted these questionable operations was, if known at all, seldom considered. That a Hudson's Bay official could spend a lifetime alternately keeping accounts, farming his glebe, and superintending the packing of salmon on the coasts of Labrador never entered into their calculations or their imaginations. Nor did it occur to Donald Alexander Smith to enlighten them. Silence concerning himself and his personal affairs was one of the most marked traits of his character. It did not arise from any trait of guile or wilful intention to mislead; only, as he himself said, "it was no part of his duty to volunteer to correct any man's opinion or delusion unless it were in the general interest." A characteristic maxim and a sound one.

Bearing this in mind, one may now understand why the bulk of Mr. Smith's early neighbours and acquaintances in Montreal believed him to hail direct from Rupert's Land. Not a few shared the belief of the Honourable Thomas White, who informed Dr. Tupper that, "a Mr. D. A. Smith has been sent out from England to manage the affairs of the Hudson's Bay Company at Montreal." But the fable which persisted down to his death was that Lord Strathcona had served somewhere in

Rupert's Land, and that he had passed many years on the shores of Hudson's Bay.

In selecting you for the delicate and important mission conveyed to you, His Excellency was influenced by the conviction that your previous long residence at Red River, your thorough knowledge of the people, and the high esteem in which you were held by all classes there, eminently qualified you to act with effect in dispossessing the minds of the misguided people of the Settlement of the erroneous opinion that they had been led to form of the feelings and intentions of the Government of the Dominion to their country.

Such were the terms in which, two years later, his antecedents were described by the Governor-General in a letter to Mr. Smith. The draft of the letter is to-day in the Privy Council Archives. It is in the handwriting of the Honourable Joseph Howe. It explains why at this critical juncture such a mediator was welcomed with open arms by the Government.

CHAPTER IX

COMMISSIONER TO RED RIVER

1869

THE moment Howe was back in Ottawa and had explained the exact situation of affairs in Assiniboia, his own perception of the enormity of the blunder which had been committed came to be shared by the Ministry. To have placated, in the first instance, Governor Mactavish and the officers of the Hudson's Bay Company had clearly been an act of the merest prudence. The Government had erroneously assumed that the interests of the London board of the Company and its fur-trading officers were identical when they were widely divergent; when the latter were smarting under a sense of injury, heightened by the undignified anxiety of the Board and the shareholders to lay hands upon the £300,000 indemnity.[1] What Howe emphasized was the failure to appoint William Mactavish

[1] "The real origin of the difficulty lies in the fact of the dissatisfaction of the Hudson's Bay Company's agents in the Red River territory with the division of the profits made by the officers of the Company in England. This had existed for some time and has been a source of controversy. The English officers finally sold their interest in the territory to the Dominion, without in the least consulting their own agents at Winnipeg. The Dominion only knew the officers in England in the transfer and could of course have no official communication with the Company's agents in the country itself." (Interview with the Honourable W. McDougall, *St. Paul Dispatch*, December 31, 1869.)

Provisional Governor of Rupert's Land and the North-West Territories under the Canadian Government. It seems incredible that no one had thought of such a solution of the difficulty. On the other hand, so far as anything was known of Mactavish, he was believed to be a loyal officer of the Company, devoted to his "employers," and accustomed implicitly to obey their orders. He had certainly successfully concealed his interest in the late transactions.

"When," Howe himself subsequently stated, "Governor Mactavish visited Canada in June last, he was in communication with the Canadian Government, and he never intimated that he even had a suspicion of discontent existing, nor did he make any suggestions as to the best mode of effecting the proposed change with the assent of the inhabitants."[1]

Be this as it may, it was too late to consider Mactavish now. McDougall's account of the check he had received on the threshold of the territory, confirmed all Howe's worst fears. To the Prime Minister fell the task of giving the baffled proconsul a belated word of advice: —

[1] *Report of Council*, 16th December, 1869.

"When the movement was first talked of in the month of September, he [John Bruce] had gone to Governor Mactavish, and asked his advice about it. Governor Mactavish said in answer to him that it would be well to resist the Canadian Government and keep McDougall out; that it was an injustice to the people, the Canadians taking possession of the country, and an injustice to the officers of the Hudson's Bay Company, because the Government had given to them no part of the £300,000 paid for their country." (*Amnesty Papers.* 1874.)

The point you must never forget now [wrote Sir John Macdonald] is that you are approaching a foreign country, under the government of the Hudson's Bay Company. You are going there under the assumption that the Company's authorities assent to your entering upon their territory, and will protect you while there. You cannot force your way in. The case is precisely as if a Canadian going to New York, should find that he would be opposed in entering Buffalo. He ought not to attempt to force his way past them, but should communicate with the United States authorities, leaving them to clear the way for his ingress, and to protect him while within their bounds.

It occurs to me that you should ascertain from Governor Mactavish the two leading half-breeds in the Territory, and inform them at once that you will take them into your Council. This man Riel, who appears to be a moving spirit, is a clever fellow, and you should endeavour to retain him as an officer in your future police. If you do this promptly, it will be a most convincing proof that you are not going to leave the half-breeds out of the law.[1]

That was the best the Ministry could do — to wish the ill-starred McDougall "well through" with his all-but-hopeless adventure.

Meanwhile, the situation at Red River grew more acute: the opposition to Canada's assumption of sovereignty became systematic. The authority of the Hudson's Bay Company being now declared to have lapsed, the country became (so reasoned the half-breeds or their clerical advisers), *ipso facto*, a republic. On the 2d of November, Governor

[1] November 20, 1869. Pope's *Memoirs of Sir John A. Macdonald.*

Mactavish thus concluded a letter to the London Secretary of the Company: —

As I close this letter, a party of one hundred of the malcontents have arrived and taken possession of Fort Garry, under pretext of defending it, as from information in his possession, Mr. Riel alleges it is in danger: guards are posted at each gate and parade the platforms. They give assurances that nothing will be touched and nothing taken. For what provisions they require, they offer to pay in the name of the Council of the Republic of the half-breeds.

About four hundred men continue on guard at St. Norbert. Outgoing and incoming mails are subjected to examination.

Enough ink has been shed and strong language spent in efforts to demonstrate the "complicity" of Mactavish and the Company's officials in this affair. Whatever was their antecedent disposition, their conduct was purely neutral and passive. To McDougall, who was neither *de facto* nor *de jure*, the deposed Governor thus describes the event alluded to in the last-quoted letter: —

On the afternoon of Tuesday, the 2d instant, a number of these daring people suddenly, and without the least intimation of their intention to make such a move, took possession of the gates of Fort Garry, where they placed themselves inside and outside the gates to the number, in all, of about 120, and where, night and day, they have constantly kept a pretty strong armed guard. On being asked what they meant by such a movement upon the fort, they said their

object was to protect it. "Protect it from what?" they were asked. To this question they replied that they would not now specify the danger, but that they would do so hereafter, and obstinately took up the position they have since kept, in spite of all our protests and remonstrances at such a bold and high-handed proceeding. On coming into the fort, they earnestly disclaimed all intention of injuring either person or property within it — and it must be allowed that in that respect they have kept their word.

We gain a further glimpse into the state of affair through a further letter to the Company's London Secretary: —

W. Mactavish to W. G. Smith

Fort Garry, Red River, 9th November, 1869.

Sir:—

I have the honour to inform you, that I yesterday heard from the Honourable William McDougall, in reply to my letter to him, copy of which was sent you with my letter of 2d instant. A copy of his letters will be sent to you hereafter; in the mean time, I may say that Mr. McDougall does not seem to think I have acted very energetically in the matter, and reminds me, very pointedly, that at present I am responsible for the peace of the country.

He mentions that on receiving at Pembina an intimation that he was not to proceed to the Settlement, he had gone to the Company's establishment at Pembina, where he remained till he was ordered to withdraw within the American territory, by an armed band of half-breed horsemen, and that, in consequence, he was, when he wrote me, camped on American territory, where he would remain till he heard from me the

result of the efforts made here to open the road to the Settlement, or till I informed him that I considered his remaining longer at Pembina useless, which, in my opinion, is a point on which I cannot advise him, though I feel convinced that at present his entry into this Settlement would lead to more serious difficulties than those to which we are at present exposed. Mr. McDougall refers to military and other arrangements, which arise out of the outrage to which he had been subjected.

Here matters remain much as they were. The Committee seem to be in constant session, but nothing is heard of them till their Secretary, Louis Riel, issues his manifestoes, "by order." The idea of their organization seems to have been taken from the place used to distribute relief supplies last winter, each Canadian parish having sent a delegate to form the Central Committee, and in an invitation issued this morning to the Protestant part of the community, delegates are requested to meet the twelve members of the Committee already formed from the Roman Catholic parishes in Council. Here the same plan is adhered to, and the Protestant parishes are named; the object of the proposed meeting being, "since the invader is driven from our soil," to consult on the state of the country and the government to be adopted. The position is undoubtedly serious, and the case will require very careful handling, as any collision between parties will lead to the plain Indians being brought down on the Settlement next spring, as well as disturbances over all the plain districts, which will not be put down for years, long before which the whole business of the country will have been destroyed.

I have, etc., W. MACTAVISH.

Clearly, matters could not go on thus. It was all very well to stand aside while an engine is being prepared, and even directed against a *corpus non gratum;* but when it exhibits symptoms of operating blindly against a whole community, measures must be taken to check it. The Canadian Party, prompted by McDougall, loudly called upon Mactavish, whom they addressed as "William Mactavish, Esquire, Governor, Hudson's Bay Company, Fort Garry" (an ingenious evasion of the titular difficulty), to issue a proclamation. It is not necessary to print this document here. It was largely signed by the citizens, many of whom instantly perceived that it was exactly the sort of language which ought to have been addressed, and with far greater propriety, to the Honourable Joseph Howe on his late visit to the territory. Howe could have replied to it with fuller knowledge, clearer authority and more moral force than was possible to the now sick, harassed, and superseded Mactavish. On the 16th Mactavish issued his Proclamation. In the course of that document he showed how a number of unlawful acts had undoubtedly been committed by bodies of armed men. Amongst other acts he enumerated: —

A body of armed men have entered the Hudson's Bay Company's post at Pembina, where *certain gentlemen from Canada*[1] with their families, were peaceably living, and under threats of violence have compelled them to quit the establishment at a season of the year

[1] The italics are mine.

when the rigours of winter were at hand, and forced them to retire within American territory.

And in the last place, they have avowed it as their intention in all those unlawful proceedings, to resist arrangements for the transfer of the government of this country, which have been made under the sanction of the Imperial Parliament, and of virtually setting at defiance the royal authority, instead of adopting those lawful and constitutional means, which, under the enlightened rule of Her Most Gracious Majesty our Queen, are sufficient for the ultimate attainment of every object that rests upon reason and justice; the persons who have engaged in committing those unlawful deeds have resorted to acts which directly tend to involve themselves in consequences of the gravest nature, and to bring upon the Colony and the country at large, the evils of anarchy and the horrors of war.

In conclusion, the Hudson's Bay Company's Governor of Assiniboia charged the aggressors to disperse and depart to their habitations under the dire pains and penalties of the law he was powerless to enforce.

His real sentiments he had a few days before exposed, in a letter to his brother Dugald Mactavish in Montreal: —

William Mactavish to Chief Factor Dugald Mactavish

Fort Garry, 4th November, 1869.

I will not speak of our dignity, but it is more than flesh and blood can bear that we who have conducted the government of this country for years, with a view to the welfare and best interests of all classes of the inhabitants, should be summarily ejected from office,

as if we were the commonest usurping scoundrels. Why should we be in such indecent haste to cut our own throats? What are the Canadians to us that we should fall into their arms the moment they approach us?

But if Governor Mactavish's natural indignation escaped him in private, he was careful to avoid any trace of it in his official correspondence. By contrast, it must be confessed that McDougall's official letter-writing is marked with an irascibility he was at no pains to conceal. Instead of addressing Mactavish (surely a fellow-sufferer!) in a friendly style, his letters were frankly offensive. He harped constantly on the "secret disinclination" of the authorities at Fort Garry to "put down the rebellion." [1]

On the 20th of November, McDougall wrote as follows to Howe: —

The confirmed belief of every person I have seen, or whose testimony has reached me, is that the Hudson's Bay Company's employees, with scarcely an exception, are either actively or tacitly encouraging the insurrection. It was the prevalence of this belief that

[1] The Prime Minister himself later wrote to McDougall: "Do not let yourself, by any feeling of impatience or irritation, however natural it may be, show that you have any distrust of the Hudson's Bay authorities. I have no doubt of the good faith of the Company in England, and of Governor Mactavish, but have little doubt that you are correct in the idea that the subordinate officials dislike excessively being set aside by newcomers. That feeling is a natural one, and is to be removed by kindness and confidence and not by any appearance of suspicion or reserve." This was written on December 8, shortly after the Premier's interview with Mr. Donald Smith had taken place. (Pope, *Memoirs of Sir John A. Macdonald.*)

determined me to force the authorities into a public declaration of some kind, that would dispel this illusion — if such it should prove to be — or compel them to show their hand as abettors of the insurrection. The "appeal" of the loyal inhabitants, who had previously opened correspondence with me, was the last screw applied, and seems to have accomplished the purpose.

McDougall then and ever afterwards insisted that the Company's officials, aware beforehand of the insurgents' intention to take possession of the fort, took no steps to prevent it.

The "rebels" [he said] had found the gates open two weeks previously, were allowed to enter without protest; were accommodated with pemmican, brandy, tobacco, etc., *ad libitum*, by the obliging officers of the H. B. Company; and when asked, for form's sake, to walk out, declined with thanks! They laughed at the "protest" more boisterously, but not more heartily, than their willing captive, the unwilling protester, and then made themselves comfortable for the winter. Mr. Bookkeeper Mactavish, no doubt, for form's sake also, charging the pemmican, brandy, etc., to the Canadian Government! As matters turned out, I frankly admit that my policy, in respect to Governor Mactavish, and the Hudson's Bay Company's servants at Fort Garry, was not a success.[1]

Having laid hands upon Fort Garry, and confiscated such of its stores as his followers required, Riel's next exploit was to seize the furniture which Governor McDougall had purchased for installa-

[1] McDougall to Howe, *Red River Rebellion*.

tion in some as yet undesignated Government House. This he appropriated and removed to the quarters of the Provisional Government in Fort Garry. Armed guards were stationed in the town or village of Winnipeg, who regularly patrolled the streets, on the *qui vive* for any overt act hostile to Riel's authority.

Upon receiving the support of a Convention, held in Fort Garry, of both French and English half-breeds, Riel announced that until Mr. McDougall could produce an Act of Parliament, securing to the inhabitants of Red River certain rights, which were forthwith expressly enumerated, he would continue to be refused entry into the territory.[1]

The fateful 1st of December rapidly approached. McDougall the Governor-designate was still at the lonely frontier post of Pembina. When he had left Ottawa, he knew it was the fixed intention of the Government to issue the Queen's Proclamation on

[1] "It is to be noted that when the proposal to constitute a Provisional Government was mooted in the Convention, a certain portion of the English deputies declined to take part in the proceedings until they had ascertained whether or no Governor Mactavish, the legal ruler of the territory, still considered himself vested with authority. A deputation was accordingly appointed to wait upon him in his sick-chamber, for this gentleman had unfortunately during many previous weeks been suffering from the mortal disease of which he soon after died. Mactavish promptly informed them that he considered his jurisdiction had been abolished by the Proclamation of McDougall; that he was a 'dead man' and that they had, therefore, better construct a government of their own to maintain the peace of the country. Returning to their colleagues, the deputation announced to the Convention what Governor Mactavish had said, and as a result, Riel and his colleagues were nominated to their respective offices." (Lord Dufferin, *Memorandum.*)

the 1st of December. No further instructions had reached him cancelling this arrangement; he now decided to act the great proconsular part altogether by himself.

McDougall to Howe

PEMBINA, U.S., November 25, 1869.

SIR:—I have the honour to report that I am still at Pembina in the territory of the United States . . . and unable, in consequence of the continued occupation of the road by armed men, to proceed to Fort Garry.

I have further to report that I have not received any instruction for my guidance on and after the day of the transfer of the territory to Canada, nor any notice of the Order-in-Council, which has no doubt passed to effect it.

In these circumstances I am compelled to act upon the general powers and directions of my commission, and of the Acts of Parliament, Canadian and Imperial, which seem to bear upon the case.

I have accordingly prepared a Proclamation to be issued on the 1st day of December, reciting so much of the several Acts of Parliament as seemed necessary to disclose the requisite authority, and stating, by way of recital, the fact of surrender by the Hudson's Bay Company, acceptance by Her Majesty, and transfer to Canada, from and after the 1st of December, A.D. 1869. Those facts I gather from the newspapers, from a private letter to me of the Deputy Governor of the Company, and my own knowledge before I left Ottawa, that the 1st December had been agreed upon as the date of the transfer.

In the present state of affairs in the Settlement, it is of the utmost importance to announce the transfer

in the most authentic and solemn manner possible, in order to give confidence, and the protection of legality, to the act of the loyal and well-disposed and to put the malcontents and their American advisors and sympathizers publicly and technically in the wrong.

Authentically and solemnly, then, was this notable ukase composed. Two other minor proclamations it occurred to McDougall to issue. In one of these he coolly deposed Governor Mactavish, and in the other appointed his friend and lieutenant, Colonel Dennis, Deputy Governor. Not that McDougall was without some misgivings as to the legality of one detail of his procedure. In a letter to the Secretary of State, he observes *naïvely*, "I hope I am right in using the name of Her Majesty as prominently as I have done." Concerning this trifling informality, the Secretary of State and even Queen Victoria herself would have something to say later on.

Governor Mactavish, lying very ill now at Fort Garry, — "nightly coughing much blood," — had not even been shown a copy of his rival's Proclamation.

With this formidable document in his pocket, Colonel Dennis dashed forward and occupied Lower Fort Garry (the "Stone Fort") with his followers. His arrival and occupation he heralded by a letter (the amount of the letter-writing is bewildering!) to Governor Mactavish mentioning the object of his raid and enclosing a copy of his commission. On the 6th of December, "Lieutenant-Governor" Dennis issued a general "call to arms." "All loyal

men" were summoned to assist by every means in their power "to restore public peace and order and the supremacy of the Queen in this part of Her Majesty's dominions." This vigorous proceeding, followed by the drilling of enrolled Canadians, and the haranguing of a body of Indians, naturally incited Riel to reflex action. On the following evening, the Métis leader assembled his men in front of Dr. Schultz's house, produced a copy of Colonel Dennis's commission, which having read, with every mark of disgust and contumely, he dashed to the ground and trampled upon. The dwelling of Dr. Schultz was surrounded, and all his adherents were compelled to surrender. Riel suddenly found himself master of forty-five Canadian prisoners.

Two days later Colonel Dennis wrote to his chief: —

> You may rely upon it, these people are fully in possession for the winter, and say themselves that, with the promises they have of Fenian and filibusters' support, they will be able to hold the country. I should not be surprised but that they may get many people here to join them too. I think they would do anything, many of them, rather than offend the French now, as (they say) they see, per "List of Rights," that the French ask nothing unreasonable.

Still at Pembina was Governor McDougall. His henchman, the valiant Dennis, having exhausted all his resources, which were, as we have seen, somewhat inadequate, now prepared to return thither. To recapitulate the foregoing events briefly, Dennis had issued a "call to arms," had stirred up people

in all the parishes, harangued and excited the Indians, hurried to and fro, crying first, "To arms! to arms!" and then a week after, "Cease from further action." Now he hurried back (disguised, report said, as a squaw) to McDougall's side, leaving behind him forty-five Canadians in gaol, and the whole countryside seething with excitement. On the 15th of December, seventeen days after his departure from Pembina, he returned, having accomplished this much.

The opinion of Sir John Macdonald upon this unsuccessful *coup d'état* may be conjectured. To the ministry it brought consternation.

Sir John Macdonald to Hon. John Rose

McDougall has made a most inglorious fiasco. Notwithstanding this, from mere impatience at his uncomfortable position at Pembina, and before he could possibly have received instructions in answer to his report of being stopped on the way, he chose to assume that, on the 1st of December, the surrender was made by the Company and the Order-in-Council passed by the Queen, and that the Order-in-Council was to appoint the day of its issue as the day of the Union. He issued a Proclamation under the Great Seal of the new Province, formally adding it to the Dominion. He then entered into a series of glorious intrigues, particulars of which I do not yet know, with the Swampy Indians near Red River, and with the Sioux Indians at Portage la Prairie, and sent the irrepressible Stoughton Dennis, in his capacity of "Conservator of the Peace," as he dubbed him, to surprise the Stone Fort.

By the way, I forgot to mention that Colonel Dennis, while at Fort Garry, consulted the Recorder, Black, as to the advisability of declaring martial law. Did you ever hear such frenzy?

All this has been done in the direct teeth of instructions, and he has ingeniously contrived to humiliate himself and Canada, to arouse the hopes and pretensions of the insurgents, and to leave them in undisputed possession until next spring. He has, in fact, done all in his power to prevent the success of our emissaries, who were to arrive at Pembina on Christmas Day, and who would, I think, if things had been kept quiet, have been able to reconcile matters without any difficulty. As it is now, it is more than doubtful that they will be allowed access to the Territory or intercourse with the insurgents.[1]

To McDougall himself, Howe was no longer reluctant in expressing his sentiments.

Howe to McDougall

OTTAWA, 26th December, 1869.

SIR:—

Your despatch, dated Pembina, 2d December, and its enclosures, reached this office on the 18th inst., and were promptly laid before the Governor-General and Council.

As it would appear, from these documents, that you have used the Queen's name without Her authority, attributed to Her Majesty acts which she has not yet performed, and organized an armed force within the territory of the Hudson's Bay Company, without warrant or instruction, I am commanded to assure

[1] Pope, *Memoirs of Sir John A. Macdonald.*

you that the grave occurrences which you report have occasioned here great anxiety.

The exertion of military force against the misguided people now in arms, even if under the sanction of the law, was not to be hastily risked, considering the fearful consequences which might ensue were the Indians, many of them but recently in contact with the white inhabitants of the neighbouring states, drawn into the conflict.

But, as the organization and use of such a force by you was, under the circumstances, entirely illegal, the Governor-General and Council cannot disguise from you the weight of responsibility you have incurred.

Although at this date in December McDougall was unaware of the enormity of his offence, it had already dawned upon him that he was being thrown over by his former colleagues.[1] He determined then to play his last card with Riel. It took the form of the following polite effusion: —

[1] "Why did the movement of the loyal people of the Settlement, under Colonel Dennis, fail? Leaving out of view all secondary and minor causes, the reason was this: The rebel leaders had private information from Ottawa by the same mail that brought me your non-committal and deceptive despatch of 19th November, that the Canadian Government would not accept the transfer! That their so-called Governor had no authority, would be left to get out of the scrape as best he could, and that the leaders of the insurrection need not fear either punishment or coercion! I may add that the same mail brought me the *Montreal Gazette*, with a paragraph informing the public that the Government had telegraphed Mr. Rose not to pay over the £300,000! *This was the first and only information I received while at Pembina from which I could infer your policy.* Ritchot and Riel were better advised; they had positive information and acted upon it at once. They laid siege to the house of Dr. Schultz in which the Canadians and loyalists of the town of Winnipeg had assembled, cut off their supplies and made them prisoners." (Letter to Howe. *The Red River Rebellion.*)

A Persuasive Epistle

McDougall to Riel

PEMBINA, December 13th, 1869.

To Louis Riel, Esq.: —

SIR, — I hear from the Hudson's Bay post that you are expected to arrive there from Fort Garry to-night. I send this note to inform you that I am anxious to have a conversation with you, before answering despatches which I have recently received from the Dominion Government. I have not yet had any communication from you, or from any one else on behalf of the French half-breeds, who have prevented me from proceeding to Fort Garry, stating their complaints or wishes in reference to the new Government.

As the representative of the Sovereign, to whom you and they owe, and, as I am told, do not wish to deny allegiance, it is proper that some such communication should reach me. It will be a great misfortune to us all, I think, if I am obliged to return to Canada and hand over the powers of government here to a military ruler. This will be the inevitable result unless we find some solution of the present difficulty very soon.

I have full powers from the Government, as well as the strongest desire personally, to meet all just claims of every class and section of the people. Why should you not come to me and discuss the matter?

I beg you to believe that what has occurred will not affect my mind against you or those for whom you may be authorized to speak.

The interview proposed must be without the knowledge or privity of certain American citizens who pretend to be *en rapport* with you.

I trust to your honour on this point

Very faithfully yours,

WILLIAM MCDOUGALL.

It was a last card, but it did not win the trick. Riel, unmoved even by the "Esquire," treated this pathetic missive "most contemptuously," returning no answer.

On the 16th, McDougall wrote to Governor Mactavish, generously reinstating the sick man in his position: —

If, in consequence of the action of the Dominion Government (withholding payment to the Hudson's Bay Company of the purchase money), the surrender and transfer of the country did not take place on the first day of December, as previously agreed upon, then you are the chief executive officer as before, and responsible for the preservation of the peace and the enforcement of the law.

If, on the other hand, the transfer *did* take place on the first day of December, then, I take it, my commission came into force, and the notice in the form of a Proclamation, issued by my authority on that day, correctly recited the facts and disclosed the legal status of the respective parties.

Had the situation not been so tragic, Comedy might surely have claimed it for her own!

In the language of one of the settlers at Red River: —

About the time of Mr. McDougall's departure from Pembina it became generally known throughout the Settlement that the Proclamation he had issued as coming from the Queen was a false one, and it was strange to perceive the complete revulsion of feeling that took place among the settlers generally. If there was one thing more than another that assisted to

strengthen the hands of Riel, it was that. People who had professed to be supporters of the incoming government at once cooled in their ardour, and this led the way, more than anything else, to place Riel in the position which he afterwards held.[1]

Governor McDougall was no longer at Pembina. Slowly and in anger, he shaped his course southward. On December 21, at two o'clock in the afternoon, he again encountered two important travellers on the road, even as the Honourable Joseph Howe had said, "the middle of the open prairie."

On the 24th of November, Mr. Donald Smith in Montreal received from Sir Stafford Northcote, the Company's London Governor, a private letter which expressed the deep concern of himself and his fellow-directors at the unlooked-for occurrences at Red River which promised to jeopardize the Company's interests: —

In view of Governor Mactavish's intimation concerning his state of health, it was hoped that he would be relieved as quickly as possible from a situation

[1] "The ostensible reason for the continuance of the original rising was the fact of Mr. McDougall remaining at Pembina, that indicating a persistence to take possession of the Territory without the consent of the inhabitants. This greatly intensified the feeling of the people." (Statement of Chief Factor J. H. McTavish, Amnesty Committee, 1874.)

Yet on November 23, Sir John Macdonald had written: "I hope no consideration will induce you to leave your post, — that is, to return to Canada just now. Such a course would cover yourself and your party with ridicule, which would extend to the whole Dominion. I am in great hopes that, by patience and kindliness, you may be able to subdue the present excitement."

requiring great firmness. From all that we can gather, the Canadians in the Settlement are an unscrupulous lot and are intriguing in such a manner as to bring us all into grave trouble if they are not instantly checked.

By the same English mail, Mr. Smith also received an official letter from the Company's Secretary in which the Governor and Directors offered their moral aid to the Canadian Government, leaving it to their General Manager to convey this assurance to the Ministry.

The situation was indeed serious and no time was to be lost, but so great was his own delicacy and his reluctance even to seem to wound the morbid susceptibilities of Governor Mactavish that he despatched to the latter a copy of the letter he now forwarded to Ottawa: —

Donald A. Smith to the Secretary of State

HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY'S OFFICE,
MONTREAL, 24th November, 1869.

SIR, — I have to-day received from the Hudson's Bay House, London, an extract of a letter from Governor Mactavish, dated Fort Garry, 12th October, and have now the honour of transmitting it to you. In doing so, I am directed by the Governor and Committee to state that the Company are anxious to afford all the assistance in their power in inducing the Red River people to allow the surveys to be proceeded with, and to use their influence in any other manner with the view of assisting the authorities at Red River to make their arrangements for the government of the country.

And in view of the more serious aspect which affairs

Hudsons Bay Company's Office.
Montreal 24th Nov 1869

The Honble
The Secretary of State for Canada
Ottawa

Sir,

I have to-day received from the
Hudson's Bay House London an extract of

a letter from Governor Macdonnell dated from
Quebec 12th October and have now the honor
of transmitting it to you - In doing so I am
directed by the Governor and Committee to state
that the Company are anxious to afford all
the assistance in their power in inducing
the Red River people to allow the surveys
to be proceeded with and to use their in-
fluence in any other manner with the
view of asserting the authorities at Red

at Red River have recently assumed, I beg further on behalf of the Company to offer assurance that their Governors, Factors, and officers generally, will use their influence and best efforts to restore and maintain order throughout the Territory.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

DON. A. SMITH.[1]

On the 28th of November Mr. Smith read the following in the *Montreal Gazette* from a Red River correspondent: —

So far the Hudson's Bay Government has done nothing to quell the disturbance, at least as far as I have heard. It is the opinion here that if they had taken active steps some time since, the insurgent movement would have been easily put down, and what the end may be now is not so easy to foretell.

Mr. Smith received confirmation from Governor Mactavish that the Company's premises had been seized by the insurgents.

[1] The acknowledgment of this was as follows: —

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE,
OTTAWA, 26th November, 1869.

Donald A. Smith, Esq.,
Hudson's Bay Company, Montreal.

SIR, — I have the honour to acknowledge your letter of the 24th instant, and enclosure, and I am directed at the same time to express the acknowledgment of the Dominion Government, for the assurance therein contained, that the Governor, Factors, and officers generally of the Hudson's Bay Company will use their influence and best effort to restore and maintain order throughout the North-West Territory.

I have, etc.,

E. PARENT,
Under Secretary.

William Mactavish to Donald A. Smith

FORT GARRY, November 9th, 1869.

I regret very much to have to inform you that the Honourable William McDougall, who had been warned by the Canadian half-breeds of this Settlement not to come into the Colony, on his arrival at Pembina has been, within the last week, driven out of the Company's establishment and forced to withdraw within the American lines, by an armed force of that same portion of our population. At the same time that they sent to drive back MacDougall, a party was sent here to occupy this establishment under the pretext of protecting it, and though their protection was declined they still remain, and it would appear are determined to go to greater lengths than they have yet done, as the nominal leaders of the movement have invited delegates from the other portions of the population to meet them on the 10th instant, to consider the condition of the country as well as to express their views as to the form of Government to be adopted.

While replying to this officially Mr. Smith also addressed the following privately to Mr. Mactavish:—

Donald A. Smith to William Mactavish

MONTREAL, 28th November, 1869.

DEAR MR. MACTAVISH:—

Your brother has very kindly shewn me your letter to him of the 10th inst. I fully share your indignation at the informality of which both the British and Ottawa Governments have been guilty in not furnishing you with any official notification of the proposed changes, but have entrusted the whole matter to Mr. McDougall's discretion.

With regard to what you say about the Canadians, I cannot but venture to remind you that the officers of the Company, in so far as they possess a share in the fur-trade, owe their status to the independent traders and merchants of Montreal, who effected the coalition of 1821, and that consequently our whole body has a historic connection with Canada. . . . Altogether apart, therefore, from the unfortunate manner in which your status and authority has been disregarded, I, for one, hold that our interests should properly lie with Canada, rather than with any alternative form of government.

It is wholly inconceivable that any of our people should dream of joining their fortunes to the Americans and thus sacrificing their birthright, no matter what the provocation afforded by such men as Dr. Schultz. Yet if Mr. Riel's party is permitted to gain the ascendancy, they will either become the prey or the associates of hordes of filibusters even now ready to pour into the territory. On the other hand, the establishment of a Crown Colony could only serve to delay a final and now, as I think, inevitable settlement, and debar us from any substantial advantages which we are now hoping to reap from the transfer. . . .

Believe me, my dear Mr. Mactavish,

Very faithfully yours, DON. A. SMITH.

Ere the ink was dry on this letter, a telegram arrived from the Prime Minister, Sir John Macdonald, requesting the presence of Mr. Smith at Ottawa, in order to have the benefit of his advice and opinions.

On the 29th, Mr. Smith arrived in the capital, and he and the great political leader, Sir John A.

Macdonald, met for the first time. Mr. Smith wrote of this interview: —

Sir John's first words were, "This is a very serious business, Mr. Smith." I replied, "Very serious, indeed." He continued, "I have sent for you, first in order to inform you that unless the aspect of affairs alters very much, I fear that it will be quite impossible for Canada to fulfil her part of the bargain; and secondly, because I wished to ascertain from you exactly what the attitude of the Hudson's Bay Company's officers is toward this outbreak in the North-West. I want you to speak frankly and freely. We, on our side, are ready to acknowledge any mistakes we have committed. But when we undertook the transfer we certainly relied upon the ability of the Company to fulfil its share of the bargain. Evidently, we expected too much. We now learn that certain differences exist between the Company and its officers in the North-West. Apparently your Governor in England and your Governor in Rupert's Land do not see eye to eye on this important matter. What are we to do?"

I told the Premier that since he desired me to express my views frankly, I thought a grave mistake had been committed by the Canadian Government in not securing the coöperation and good-will of Mr. Mactavish before sending Mr. McDougall and the previous emissaries, Messrs. Snow and Mair, into the country.

"But," he instantly rejoined, "we supposed that Sir Stafford Northcote and the other directors in London had secured this coöperation and good-will beforehand. You do not doubt that Governor Mactavish will fulfil his duty?"

I replied that I was convinced that Mr. Mactavish, however aggrieved he might feel personally, was a man

of the strictest honour and would strive earnestly to carry out his instructions, both in letter and spirit. At the same time he was in failing health and the strain of the last few months had told severely upon him.[1]

Sir John thereupon declared, that this circumstance greatly added to the seriousness of the situation. He then asked me as to the character and views of Dr. Cowan, Mr. J. H. McTavish, and others at Fort Garry. He declared that while the Government wished to do everything to help McDougall out of his scrape, and to preserve the peace, they did not intend that the Hudson's Bay Company should evade any of its responsibilities. "Not a penny should be paid until the peaceable possession was assured." After an interview of about two hours, I took my leave, Sir John urging me not to leave the capital until he had received important despatches hourly expected from London.[2]

[1] On this point, Mr. Smith afterwards said: "Mr. Mactavish was well known to be a gentleman of the strictest integrity, a man ever actuated by the highest principles of honour, a man whose memory was enshrined in the hearts of the whole people of Red River of his day. He would be long remembered for the good he had conferred on the country. Mr. Mactavish saw that he was unable to withstand the strong force in opposition to him, and in order to prevent bloodshed he adopted the course which he thought most advisable under the circumstances, and in this I cordially coöperated with him. How could Mr. Mactavish have found means of doing anything against such an insurrection as that to which he was opposed? The people, rightly or wrongly, — I did not then think rightly, — believed their rights were in jeopardy. They believed they ought to have been consulted before they were dragged into Confederation, and I frankly admit I held the same opinion. Seeing they were not consulted, they determined to protect their rights as they understood them, and with such a force against him, Mr. Mactavish was powerless." (*Parliamentary Debates*, 1876.)

[2] *Memorandum* signed "Don. A. Smith," 9th December, 1869. "Our action in England," wrote the Premier (December 12), "has stirred up the Hudson's Bay Company, and they have doubtless

On the following day, Mr. Secretary Howe informed Mr. Smith that the Ministry regarded it as highly unfortunate that Bishop Taché, whose influence with the half-breeds was very great, should not be at his post at Red River; that under the circumstances, they had been advised to despatch a Roman Catholic priest, who would endeavour to pour oil on the troubled waters.[1] On Thursday, the 1st of December, the day on which the transfer was to have come into effect, Mr. Smith again saw the Prime Minister.

He said to me, "the Hudson's Bay Company people are suspected — I don't say whether there is anything in it or not, but all the letters I get from the unprejudiced observers in the North-West, or people who have lived in the North-West, continually make a point of this, — that the Company's people are suspected of secretly fomenting this insurrection."

sent out, and will continue to send, urgent messages to everybody under their influence, to act energetically in putting an end to this state of anarchy. From Rose's letters, it is obvious that both the Colonial Office and the Company would like to throw the whole responsibility on Canada, and, if we once accepted it, they would leave us to get out of the trouble the best way we could. By our positively declining to do so, and insisting upon getting peaceable possession, we shall, I have no doubt, secure the active coöperation of both; and if it be necessary in the spring to send out a force by Fort William, it will be, I have little doubt, a combined force of regulars and volunteers." (Pope, *Memoirs of Sir John A. Macdonald*, vol. II.)

[1] The good bishop cannot be acquitted on such easy terms as he has enjoyed. Nothing should have prevented him from being at his post at this crisis. He saw in Confederation "the ruin of that which has cost us so dear." And he wrote Cartier in October, "I have always feared the entrance of the North-West into Confederation, because I have always believed that the French Catholic element would be sacrificed." He seems to have suspected that he would be called upon to pull the chestnuts out of the fire for the Government.

To this I replied, "I doubt very much if there are any unprejudiced persons at all living in the North-West; it must be manifest to you that the adjustment of the present difficulty would be of greater advantage to the Company and the officers of the Company than to any private individuals. If no settlement occurs there will be no transfer, and if there is no transfer of the territory, law and order and property will be at the mercy of the most lawless members of the community until the Americans step in and annex it."

The Prime Minister then said: "It would be a great advantage to us if you would preach this view to your fellow-officers at Fort Garry. Why don't you go?" I replied instantly that I would be prepared to go if circumstances continued to warrant it.

Two days later he wrote thus to a friend: —

Donald A. Smith to Chief Trader Colin Rankin

OTTAWA, 3d December, 1869.

MY DEAR MR. RANKIN: —

Here I have been since Tuesday last, having come on from Montreal on Monday at the request of Sir John A. Macdonald, but not looking to a detention of much more than twelve or twenty-four hours at the outside. Fancy, then, how anxious I am to get back to Montreal! and I do hope and trust things may be in train for letting me go to-morrow. I need hardly tell you my visit has reference to the outbreak at Red River, which, although probably exaggerated, is no doubt a very serious matter, requiring much consideration and prudence in its treatment. My latest accounts, received to-day from Fort Garry, are of the 13th November, when the insurgents still held Fort Garry. All the while, most unfortunately, Governor

Mactavish[1] was so very ill as to be confined to bed and from the tone of his letters, I regret to say there is but little chance of his speedy recovery. The Government intends sending up a priest, — Grand Vicar Thibault, I think he is called, — and Mr. or Colonel de Salaberry, to endeavour to pacify the French half-breeds, and will no doubt take other measures, but what these may be has not yet been made public. No doubt we shall hear all about it in a few days.

The light in this house, the Russell, is so wretchedly bad, that it is with the utmost difficulty I manage to write at all; so you must excuse all sorts of irregularities in this scrawl.

Believe me, yours very sincerely,
DON. A. SMITH.

In his present proceeding Mr. Smith was conscious that the Company might disavow him, but already he had begun to perceive the possibility of a line of divergence between the interests of the London Board and his own and those of the officers of the fur-trade. He was, as he openly declared a few weeks later, ready to resign his commission in the Company's service if necessary. He felt it was his duty to proceed to Red River and act as an intermediary between the discontented and distrustful fur-traders, the half-breed insurgents, and the so-called "Canadian" party led by Dr. Schultz. Twenty-four hours after this interview, the Prime Minister wrote to Howe: —

[1] I find Mr. Smith spells the name in this letter — erroneously — MacTavish. The proper orthography is Mactavish. J. H. McTavish was no relation. The Governor-designate signed his name McDougall.

Appointed Canadian Commissioner

Sir John A. Macdonald to Joseph Howe

OTTAWA, December 3d, 1869.

Private and Confidential.

MY DEAR HOWE: —

I am now strongly of opinion that we should make instant use of D. A. Smith. In the chat I had with him to-day he took high ground, declared himself a staunch *Canadian* and lost no opportunity of emphasizing his own complete impartiality as well as the desire of the Company to effect a speedy settlement of this unhappy business. If the Hudson's Bay officers are implicated in fomenting the disturbance, Smith can, from his position, discourage them. . . .

Very faithfully yours,
JOHN A. MACDONALD.

The result was the appointment of Donald A. Smith as Canadian Commissioner to Red River and he hastened back to Montreal to prepare for his journey.

On the day of Mr. Smith's departure from Ottawa, Sir John Macdonald wrote to Mr. Rose: —

I cannot understand the desire of the Colonial Office, or the Company, to saddle the responsibility of the government [of the North-West] on Canada just now. It would so completely throw the game into the hands of the insurgents and the Yankee wire-pullers, who are to some extent influencing the movement from St. Paul, that we cannot foresee the consequences. On the other hand, the delay leaves Mactavish in power, and all his subordinate officials, with full authority to keep peace in the country and prevent matters going to extremities.

So well did Mr. Smith keep his counsel that it was not until the 9th of December that any knowledge of his intended journey had become current.[1] On the morning of that day, the *Gazette* published the following: —

It is rumored that Donald A. Smith, Esq., General Manager of the Hudson's Bay Company in Canada, has instructions from the Company to proceed to Red River with as little delay as possible to aid Governor Mactavish in consequence of his illness.

It was also stated that Vicar-General Thibault and Colonel de Salaberry had been appointed Commissioners from the Canadian Government. Thus on the very eve of Mr. Smith's departure, it was popularly supposed that he went simply as an official of the Hudson's Bay Company, a status which he saw fit not to disavow. On the same day the Prime Minister drew up the formal instructions to the newly appointed Commissioner: —

Friday, December 9th.

My dear Howe: —

I send you my idea as to what the letter to Mr. Smith should be, which is at your service.

[1] "I did not get back from Ottawa till yesterday, and having been so long away from the desk you will understand how busy I shall be for a short time. In the worst of the row in Red River, it is most distressing to feel that Mr. Mactavish suffers so from ill-health. The latest accounts we have here say that although still very ill he was slightly better. I sincerely trust he may continue to improve. I will write again as soon as I can find a spare moment, and, by the way, may mention that we may want you here, for a few days. This, however, is not certain." (Donald A. Smith to Chief Trader Colin Rankin, from Montreal, 6th December.)

There should be an official letter from you to McDougall covering a copy of the letter to Smith and instructing him to aid Mr. Smith in his mission.

Yours always,
J. A. M.

OFFICE OF SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE PROVINCES.
OTTAWA, December 10th, 1869.

DONALD A. SMITH, ESQ.,
Montreal.

SIR: — I have the honour to inform you that His Excellency the Governor-General has been pleased to appoint you Special Commissioner to enquire into and report upon the causes and extent of the armed obstructions offered at the Red River, in the North-West Territories, to the peaceful ingress of the Honourable William McDougall, the gentleman selected to be the Lieutenant-Governor of that country, on its union with Canada.

Also to enquire into and report upon the causes of the discontent and dissatisfaction at the proposed change that now exists there.

Also to explain to the inhabitants the principles on which the Government of Canada intends to govern the country, and to remove any misapprehensions that may exist on the subject.

Also to take such steps, in concert with Mr. McDougall and Governor Mactavish, as may seem most proper for effecting the peaceable transfer of the country and the government from the Hudson's Bay authorities to the Government of the Dominion. You will consider this communication as your letter of appointment as Government Commissioner.

With this letter you will receive: —

A copy of the letter of instructions given to Mr. McDougall on leaving Ottawa, dated 28th September last.

Copy of a further letter of instruction to Mr. McDougall, dated 7th instant.

Copy of the Proclamation issued by His Excellency the Governor-General, addressed to the inhabitants of the North-West Territories by the express desire of Her Majesty.

These will enable you to speak authoritatively on the subject of your mission.

You will proceed with all despatch to Pembina, and arrange with Mr. McDougall as to your future course of action; and then go on to Fort Garry and take such steps as after such consultation may seem most expedient. You will, of course, consult Governor Mactavish and endeavour to arrange one system of concerted action in the pacification of the country, with Mr. McDougall, the Hudson's Bay authorities, and yourself.

As the information received by the Government here is necessarily imperfect, and as the circumstances at Red River are continually changing, it is not considered expedient to hamper you with more specific instructions. You will, therefore, act according to the best of your judgment in concert with Mr. McDougall, and you will keep me fully informed by every mail of the progress of events.

In addition to the more immediate object of your mission, you are requested to report on the best mode of dealing with the Indian tribes in the country, and generally to make such suggestions as may occur to you as to the requirements of the country for the future.

It so chanced that Dr. Charles Tupper, a prominent Nova Scotian Member of Parliament, was also for private reasons about to take a private journey to Fort Garry. His daughter was the wife of Captain Cameron, of the Royal Artillery, who had as we have seen formed one of Governor McDougall's suite, and was now believed to be in danger.

On a bitterly cold morning, the 13th of December, Mr. Smith, accompanied by his brother-in-law, Mr. Richard Hardisty, and Dr. Tupper, left the Canadian capital. So deeply concerned was Mr. Howe for the success of the mission that he came down to the railway station to bid the travellers farewell. He had said he had been requested by His Excellency to hand Mr. Smith the following letter: —

OTTAWA, 12th December, 1869.

MY DEAR MR. SMITH: —

I learn with satisfaction that you have placed your services at the disposal of the Canadian Government, and that you are proceeding to Red River to give the parties that are at variance the benefit of your experience, influence, and mediation.

In my capacity as Her Majesty's representative in the British North American Possessions, I have addressed letters to Governor Mactavish, the Protestant Bishop of Rupert's Land, and the Vicar-General, who acts in lieu of the Roman Catholic Bishop during his presence in Rome. I have sent them copies of the message received by telegraph from Her Majesty's Secretary of State, which forms the staple of the Proclama-

tion addressed to her subjects in the North-West Territory. You will observe that it calls upon all who have any complaints to make, or wishes to express, to address themselves to me as Her Majesty's representative. And you may state, with the utmost confidence, that the Imperial Government has no intention of acting otherwise — or permitting others to act otherwise — than in perfect good faith toward the inhabitants of the Red River district of the North-West.

The people may rely upon it that respect and protection will be extended to the different religious persuasions, that titles to every description of property will be perfectly guarded, and that all the franchises which have existed, or which the people may prove themselves qualified to exercise, shall be duly continued or liberally conferred.

In declaring the desire and determination of Her Majesty's Cabinet, you may very safely use the terms of the ancient formula, that "right shall be done in all cases."

Wishing you a prosperous journey and all success in your mission, of peace and good-will,

I remain,

Faithfully yours,

JOHN YOUNG.

With the foregoing letter signed by the new Governor-General, Sir John Young (afterwards Lord Lisgar), Mr. Smith bore also a communication to the Governor of Assiniboia, in itself testimony that the Government had realized its sins of omission and desired to rectify them, even at the eleventh hour.

The Journey Westward

Sir J. Young to Governor Mactavish

GOVERNMENT HOUSE, OTTAWA,
December 6th, 1869.

W. MACTAVISH, ESQ.,
Governor of Assiniboia.

SIR: — I have the honour to address you in my capacity as representative of the Queen and Governor-General of Her Majesty's British North American Possessions, and enclose for your information a copy of a message received from Earl Granville, in reply to the account which I sent officially of the events occurring in Red River Settlement. The message conveys the matured opinion of the Imperial Cabinet. The Proclamation I have issued is based on it; and you will observe that it refers all who have desires to express or complaints to make to refer to me, as invested with authority on behalf of the British Government. And the inhabitants of Rupert's Land, of all classes and persuasions, may rest assured that Her Majesty's Government has no intention of interfering with, or setting aside, or allowing others to interfere with or set aside the religions, the rights, or the franchise hitherto enjoyed, or to which they may hereafter prove themselves equal.

Make what use you think best of this communication and of the enclosed.

I have the honour to be,
Your most humble and obedient servant,
JOHN YOUNG.

Once in the train the subject of Riel and McDougall was not mentioned; the conversation ran upon political affairs in England and the character of the party leaders. On reaching Toronto,

Mr. Smith said: "I am greatly interested in this city because I thought of settling here or hereabouts thirty years ago." He then related some of the inducements which were held out in Britain to immigrants, especially those with means, in the "thirties."

Late on the evening of the 14th, Chicago was reached, and Mr. Smith remarked: "Dr. Tupper, I am greatly interested in this city for a special reason. Many years ago I thought of settling here." Tupper laughed, and when the party approached St. Paul, he remarked, "Now, Mr. Smith, I am sure you will be especially interested in St. Paul, because you once thought of settling here?"

"That is perfectly true," replied his companion with a smile, "and," he added, "I am not sure I shan't put some of my eggs into St. Paul's basket yet. The Company does a flourishing business now with this city." [1]

The conversation touched on Commissioner Smith's errand, when in glancing over his papers he expressed an apprehension that these, if found on his person, might be summarily destroyed by Riel's party.

Dr. Tupper — "Do you think they would dare do that? Besides, as a Hudson's Bay officer, you will be more or less *persona grata*."

Mr. Smith — "I may be *persona grata* to a section of its people there, but I doubt it."

Dr. Tupper was a little surprised at this, but did not press for an explanation. He had then no ink-

[1] *Memorandum* by Richard Hardisty.

ling of the fact that there was a considerable lack of cordiality amongst the North-Western officers toward the unknown Labrador man who had in some mysterious fashion been promoted over their heads.

Mr. Smith resumed, "In any case I can have no *prima facie* recommendation to the Canadian Party. This being so, if I possessed some Canadian status apart from my commission it would be a decided advantage. I might get appointed a member of the Privy Council."

"That would certainly be a great advantage. It is a pity that was not thought of before we left Ottawa."

"Oh, it is not too late. If the state of affairs continues serious, I shall telegraph to Sir John, requesting to be appointed to the Privy Council."

Of this proposal one can only remark that it betokened a striking confidence in his own powers and appreciation of his position. Mr. Kittson to whom the proposal was confided, long afterwards said, "For a gentleman comparatively so unknown as Mr. Smith to demand a Privy Councillorship fairly took my breath away."

On arrival at St. Paul the travellers were met by Kittson and others. Mr. Wheelock, a Nova Scotian and editor of the St. Paul *Pioneer Press*, furnished them with the latest tidings from Red River and a whole batch of rumours from Pembina.[1]

[1] "The reports sent by the correspondents at Pembina are false in many respects, and mainly gotten up by Enos Stuttsman and

D. A. Smith to Sir John A. Macdonald

St. Paul, Minnesota,
December 17th, 1869.

Report credited here Governor Mactavish under arrest. Situation grave, if not critical; sympathy here wholly with insurgents. Not at all probable can take in my written documents from Ottawa. To meet this would strengthen my hands considerably, and not clash with McDougall's commission if appointed to Privy Council, say eight days hence. This I ask not on personal grounds, but as giving assurance to malcontents that promises made on the part of Government would be performed in good faith. Be assured I will not compromise Government. Will be in advance of Thibault and De Salaberry; answer immediately telegram to Kittson; assent or dissent. Operator mark on envelope, "Private and Confidential."

Donald A. Smith.[1]

How much the sympathy of the St. Paul Fenians at least was with the insurgents and how keen was

Joseph Lemay, who were really in the insurrection over the border, though Americans and living on American soil. All manner of false reports were circulated among the Red River half-breeds to induce them to take up arms against him. Among other ridiculous reports was one that he had killed two priests on his way up, and had insulted the Pope and Bishop Taché, two personages he says he never saw. The Catholic priests used their influence against him, and more than all gave a practical turn to the Rebellion." (Interview with the Honourable W. McDougall.)

[1] The Prime Minister's breath was doubtless also "taken away." In his reply he said briefly, "Smith can state his appointment as Member of Council of Territory." There are two ways of looking at this: either it was a rebuke or it betrayed a strange ignorance of the situation. For Mr. Smith to have stated his appointment as a Member of Council of an unorganized Territory wherein Canada had as yet neither status nor jurisdiction would have been sheer madness.

the surveillance over travellers for the north, the following heroic effusion, still preserved, testifies. It was handed to Mr. Smith as they were leaving the hotel at St. Paul for the railway station: —

Sir, — I charge you on your life not to disregard the solemn warning contained in this letter. It has come to my knowledge that you and the person who accompanies you are emissaries from the Canadian Provincial Government. Beware how you indulge the vain hope that you will succeed where the Orangeman McDougall failed. The destiny of Red River is in its own hands and is not to be tampered with by outsiders. An honest, true-hearted patriot, surrounded and advised by men resolved upon liberty, is now at the head of affairs. His situation demands vigour, and if necessity arises, rigour. Let not ambition or mistaken zeal place you in such a position that your lives may be forfeit. Pause now before it is too late and your blood be upon your own head. Remember this warning — the moment you attempt to cross the present American boundary line you will be in serious jeopardy.

(Signed) Phoenix.

CHAPTER X

UNDERMINING THE DICTATOR

WESTWARD from the capital of Minnesota there ran a line of railway to which its American projectors had given the significant title of the St. Paul and Pacific Railroad. It had originally been intended that this road should connect with other railway systems and eventually reach the shores of Oregon. But this consummation had been frustrated by want of capital, and at the conclusion of the American Civil War and for some time afterwards the constructed and effective portion of the St. Paul and Pacific ceased abruptly at the little frontier settlement of Breckenridge.

On the 17th of December, 1869, it was difficult for the three travellers with whose present fortunes we are now concerned to estimate justly the character of the country through which the railway ran its aborted course. It was commonly spoken of as fertile, albeit visited periodically by devastating clouds of grasshoppers which descended upon it and in a single night converted it into an arid and naked desert. Knowledge of this affliction had not prevented large numbers of sturdy and intelligent settlers, chiefly of German and Scandinavian nationality, from taking up homesteads along the route and establishing themselves comfortably and hopefully with their families.

Over and above this fact and the certain prospect of an ever-increasing immigration into the American North-West, was another, namely, that this line for the distance it actually traversed formed a link in a future chain of land communication with the new country, whether Colony, Province, or Republic of Red River.

The story of Mr. Smith's financial connection with this railway belongs to another chapter: it will suffice to mention that his personal association began from this moment, when, with his two companions, he gazed out of the car windows at the snow-covered prairie between St. Paul and Breckenridge.

Leaving the railway, there came a long stage drive of two days to Fort Abercrombie, which was reached after dark on the 19th of December.

In a straight line from Fort Abercrombie to Pembina, across the prairie, the distance is perhaps a couple of hundred miles; but so circuitous is the Red River between these points that it traverses thrice that distance. Sir Charles Tupper, in his narrative of that journey, writes:—[1]

We struck across the treeless prairie, making the points on Red River for dinner and night. Along the margin of the river the land, for some fifty yards in length, is some ten feet lower than the prairie, and that belt is covered with forest trees. At night we stopped in this forest belt and made a large fire from fallen timber. There was about a foot of snow on the ground, which we cleared away with a shovel, put an India-

[1] Sir Charles Tupper, Bart., *Recollections*.

rubber cloth on the ground, our mattress on that, and then our blankets and buffalo skin over all. We lay in the open air with our feet to the fire, which rarified the air and made it quite comfortable.

At the last house at which they dined on the prairie, before reaching Fort Abercrombie, broiled elk was served. The landlord took them to an outhouse "where six fine elk were standing like horses in a stall, all frozen stiff," and gave them a hind quarter for their journey. Yet they carried as part of their baggage a box two feet square, prepared for their journey by Mr. Kittson, the agent of the Hudson's Bay Company, at St. Paul. It contained potted chicken, tongue, etc., brandy, whiskey, and wine, with bread, biscuits, and cake. Sir Charles Tupper continues: —

This we ignored. We fried elk meat in butter with potatoes, and ate that with bread, and drank tea by the pint. At Fort Abercrombie, we set a tin pail of new milk out at night and in the morning it was frozen solid. This we broke with a hatchet for use in the tea. When the elk was gone, we took to fat pork with potatoes instead. The ozone we were breathing constantly was so stimulating that we wanted nothing stronger than tea by way of stimulant, and when we reached Pembina, Mr. Smith gave the box of provisions, which we had never opened, to my daughter.

In a canvas-covered sled, the little party proceeded from Fort Abercrombie, drawn by two horses, to Georgetown, a Hudson's Bay post. This was the scene of a terrible Sioux massacre seven

years previously, when the display of the British flag had saved the Company's servants and property from destruction. At Georgetown the travellers heard that Mr. McDougall and his party had already left Pembina. Thus it came about that at two o'clock on the afternoon of the 21st, the cavalcade of the beaten and discomfited Governor was discerned approaching them along the snow-heaped track.

Truly here was a picture worthy of the painter, however little the painter, unless he had been also a prophet, would then have deemed it alluring. The three central figures, who halted and greeted each other in the depth of mid-winter, in the bosom of an icy and desolate prairie, destined within a generation to teem with millions of souls, chanced to be of the same age. McDougall, unquestionably a man of intellect, of character, and ambition, fired with zeal and confidence had set out as the ruler of Rupert's Land only two short months before. Fortune had not been kind: McDougall's political career was now as surely ended as Donald Smith's forty-year-long political and diplomatic course was just begun. With McDougall two future High Commissioners for Canada, one of them fated also to be Prime Minister and the other to bear a name long synonymous throughout the British Empire with Canada itself, held a brief and hurried converse, standing knee-deep in the snow. McDougall related brusquely what had happened; giving the last tidings he had received from Fort Garry.

On his part Dr. Tupper explained that he had been fearful of the safety of his daughter, Mrs. Cameron, whose husband was reported to be amongst Riel's prisoners. At the mention of Captain Cameron, McDougall's brow flushed. Having quarrelled with that officer (who had been none of his own choosing) he observed that, if calamity had overtaken him, the young man had brought it upon his own head. He washed his hands of Captain Cameron. Dr. Tupper protested that he understood his son-in-law was a member of McDougall's Government — the Minister of Militia — and as such of rank and consequence in the country.[1] The subject was dropped; and Dr. Tupper turned to chat with a more authentic member of the McDougall Cabinet, Mr. Richards, the Attorney-General, who had a sad tale to unfold of the sufferings of the party. He said he had not had his clothes off for two months, living in hourly peril of losing his life. While Mr. Smith lingered to talk to Mr. McDougall, his brother-in-law, Mr. Hardisty, pushed on alone to the next point, about a mile distant, where the party intended to camp for the night.

Continues Sir Charles Tupper in his narrative: —

After a little time, I said I would go on, as I thought they might wish to converse together privately. When I was about halfway across the prairie to this point,

[1] Mr. McDougall wrote: "In a short conversation with Dr. Tupper, whom I met on the plains as I was returning to Canada, he informed me that Captain Cameron was sent to the North-West under a promise that he should be a member of my Government, and that he [Dr. Tupper] had that promise in writing. This was also news to me."

as if by magic half a dozen Indians rose up before me. I had left my revolver in the sled. They could not speak a word of English or French, except "Red Lake." They said in answer to my signal as to where they came from, "Red Lake." I had a raccoon skin coat on, which they felt over, and after jabbering away they passed on in the direction of Georgetown. I went on my way.

Learning that Mr. Donald Smith was a prominent Hudson's Bay Company official, Mr. McDougall's manner scarcely became more cordial. His feelings may be conceived when he perused the following: —

Howe to McDougall

Office of the Secretary of State for the Provinces.

Ottawa, 10th December, 1869.

The Hon. W. McDougall, C.B.,
Pembina, United States.

Sir: — This will be handed to you by Donald A. Smith, Esq., who goes to Pembina, on his way to Fort Garry, at the special request of this Government.

I have the honour to enclose a copy of a letter of instructions which has been addressed to Mr. Smith, and have it in command to desire that you will consult and coöperate with that gentleman, in order that, if possible, some peaceful solution may be found of the difficulties which obstruct your entrance to the new Territory.

I have, etc.,
Joseph Howe, *Secretary.*

Repeating the words "consult" and "coöperate," McDougall said it was now useless to waste time

in talking over what was now past and done with. He had given Mr. Smith an account of recent occurrences at Red River and was now in haste to reach St. Paul. The interchange of a few more words, ended the interview; both gentlemen bowed and parted. Mr. Smith afterwards said: —

When I left Canada, very little indeed was known respecting the state of affairs in Red River. What action Mr. McDougall had taken was unknown; consequently, it was considered necessary that I should see and ascertain from him what he had done. That Mr. McDougall had left the country had made not the slightest difference to me, or the powers delegated to me by the Government of Canada. When in Ottawa, I put the question, and it was expressly understood that I should receive no instructions whatever from Mr. McDougall, and have nothing to do with him in this matter, further than to ascertain from him what he had already done, so that I might be in a position to act.

This programme being carried out, the journey was resumed. Sir Charles continues his narrative: —

We reached Grand Forks, on the 22d at 10.30, A.M., where we saw the Indians fishing on the river; slept at Antoine Girard's log house; started at 4 A.M. on the 23d, and dined (?) at North River at 8.30. As the horses became very tired we walked the last eight miles. It was very cold. We camped halfway between Salt River and Little Salt River. On the 24th, we started, after a cold night and bad dreams, at 8 A.M., reached Big Point at 1 o'clock P.M. — twelve miles from our camp and eighty miles from Pembina, stopped at Two

Rivers for tea, and drove on with Antoine Girard to Pembina, which we reached at 11 P.M. on Christmas Eve. When we arrived we found that Captain Cameron was occupying the log house erected by Mr. McDougall for his party.

Mr. Smith went on to the Hudson's Bay Company's post, two miles north of Pembina. I wished to go on to Fort Garry with him, but he said this would not do, as all at Fort Garry knew the active part I had taken in bringing about Confederation, to which they assigned all their troubles. I told him that I had promised Sir John Macdonald to get into Fort Garry, and that I intended to do so. Mr. Smith said he would try to get them to allow me to go in to see Mr. Mactavish, who was very ill, and let me know as soon as possible.

Fearing the people at Pembina, whom he found very hostile to the Canadians, would prevent his going to Fort Garry, Dr. Tupper left after a couple of days, being able to secure for his journey only a buffalo skin, a bottle of sherry, and a loaf of plain bread. When he reached the Hudson's Bay post the half-breed boy, who was driving, said: "If you could get the factor here to lend us a toboggan we would be much safer in case of a snowstorm; it would run over the snow, while our sleigh would stick."

"Drive in," ordered Tupper; "I can get anything he has."

I then knocked on the door [continues the narrative], which to my astonishment was opened by my fellow-traveller, Mr. Smith. I exclaimed, "It is not

possible that you could be here for two days, without seeing me, knowing, as you do, my great anxiety to get to Fort Garry just now and return."

He replied, "It is at the cost of one's life to go to Fort Garry just now. Riel has seized the fort, and has all the arms and ammunition, and whiskey. A man was shot yesterday, and it is simply courting death to go there at present."

"But why did you not tell me this when you knew of my impatience to hear from you?" I replied.

"Well," he said, "I knew that you were a very impetuous man, and I was afraid you would do something rash."

"I called here to ask your factor for the loan of a dog-cariole. Can I have it?" was my reply.

"Of course, you can have anything you wish, but for God's sake do not go there just now!"

I said that I was much obliged, but did not come for advice, and that I would take the dog-cariole.

It only remains to say that Sir Charles Tupper pressed on to Fort Garry, which he reached about the same time, although by another route, as Mr. Smith. He saw Riel and Father Ritchot; but the former commanded his visitors' instant departure from the Settlement and the doctor, although behaving very valiantly, deemed it prudent to comply.

We can now follow the fortunes of his late travelling companion.

On Mr. Donald Smith's arrival at Pembina and mentioning his carrying official letters from Hon. Mr. Howe, the Hudson's Bay agent there,

instantly exclaimed, "They will be seized; you must contrive some way of concealing them on your person." Various expedients were suggested. Mr. Smith, however, cut the dissensions short by declaring his intention of leaving the documents in care of Mr. McDougall's Secretary, Provencher, who had remained behind. "We will trust to making a few friends in the Settlement who will undertake to bring in the papers, when it can be done safely."[1] Moreover, this plan had the additional advantage that it allowed time for the receipt of Mr. Smith's commission. Retiring for a much-needed rest he and Hardisty arose soon after daybreak on Christmas Day and pushed on to Fort Garry, which they reached on the evening of the 27th, the very day that Riel assumed the rôle of President of the Provisional Government.

To continue the narrative in Mr. Smith's own words: —

The gate of the fort we found open, but guarded by several armed men, who, on my desiring to be shown to Governor Mactavish's house, requested me to wait till they could communicate with their chief.[2] In a

[1] "I had been warned that if found in my possession, they would unquestionably be seized, as were those brought into the settlement shortly afterwards by the Reverend Mr. Thibault and Colonel de Salaberry." (Donald A. Smith, *Report.*)

[2] Concerning Mr. Smith's arrival, Begg says both arrivals were met at the gate by Riel, who demanded to see their papers before he would admit them. Mr. Smith, having left his principal papers at Pembina, showed those he had in his possession, which were found to have little, if any, connection with the affairs of the country, and, on declaring that these were the only documents he had, was admitted. (Begg, *History of Manitoba.*)

short time Mr. Louis Riel appeared. I announced my name; he said he had heard of my arrival at Pembina, and was about to send off a party of men to bring me in. I then accompanied him to a room occupied by ten or a dozen men, whom he introduced to me as members of the "Provisional Government." He requested to know the purport of my visit, to which I replied in substance that I was connected with the Hudson's Bay Company, but also held a commission from the Canadian Government to the people of Red River, and would be prepared to produce my credentials so soon as they, the people, were willing to receive me.[1] I was then asked to take an oath not to attempt to leave the fort that night, or to upset their Government, legally established. This request I peremptorily refused to comply with, but said that, being very tired, I had no desire to go outside the gate that night, and promised to take no immediate steps to forcibly upset the so-called "Provisional Government," legal or illegal as it might be, without first announcing my intention of doing so. Mr. Riel taking exception to the word "illegal," while I insisted on retaining it, Mr. O'Donohue, to get over the difficulty, remarked, "That is as he," meaning myself, "understands it," to which I rejoined, "Precisely so." The above explanation I am the more particular in giving, as it has been reported that I at once acknowledged the Provisional

[1] On the arrival of Mr. Smith and Mr. Hardisty, another official of the Hudson's Bay Company, they were both taken into the office of President Riel, where they were closely catechized as to their business there and as to any papers in their possession; whereupon Mr. Smith assured the catechizer that he had not in his possession, at that time, any documents except such as he would show him; and suiting the action to the word, he opened his desk to him for inspection. Of course, nothing contraband was found. (Young, *Manitoba Memoirs*.)

Government to be legal. Neither then nor afterwards did I do so.[1]

At the conclusion of this interview, Mr. Smith took up his quarters in the house previously occupied by the Company's officers, and requesting pen, ink, and paper, at once wrote to his wife, the letter being entrusted to a messenger to convey it if possible to Pembina. He also sent a brief note to Mr. Kittson at St. Paul.[2]

From that date until the close of February, Mr. Smith was, as he says, "virtually a prisoner within the fort, although with permission to go outside the walls for exercise, accompanied by two armed guards, a privilege of which I never availed myself."[3]

Yet fortunately he had an active lieutenant and

[1] "Riel," observes Mr. Ewart, "was evidently very distrustful of Mr. Smith. While the other delegates were allowed full liberty, Mr. Smith seems to have been kept under strict surveillance. The difference in tone between the reports of the Grand Vicar and Mr. Smith shows clearly the reason for this difference in treatment. Mr. Smith was in keen sympathy with the Canadians, and did not dissemble his antagonism to Riel; while the Grand Vicar's rôle was that of the placating negotiator. Mr. Smith's first interview with Riel was quite enough to put a less able man on his guard against him." (J. S. Ewart, K.C., *The Manitoba School Question.*)

[2] *Telegram*

DUGALD MACTAVISH, Montreal. ST. PAUL, 8th January, 1870.

Advise Northcote, Smith reports Riel took forcible possession of the Company's safe at Fort Garry, containing one thousand and ninety (1090) pounds sterling, principally Company's current notes.

N. W. KITTSON.

[3] In its issue of 7th January the Winnipeg *New Nation* merely announced that "Donald A. Smith, General Manager of the Hudson's Bay Company arrived at Fort Garry last week. He comes to assist Governor Mactavish during his illness in the management of the Company's affairs."

agent in Richard Hardisty, whose movements, strange to say, were not restricted. The reason was that Hardisty had Indian blood in his veins. He spoke the Indian as well as the French tongue fluently. He had Métis friends in the Settlement and he freely consorted with them. Riel deemed it prudent to let Mr. Smith's relative alone.

On the 4th of January was written the following letter to the Prime Minister: —

Donald A. Smith to Sir John A. Macdonald

FORT GARRY, 4th January, 1870.

DEAR SIR JOHN MACDONALD: —

You are aware that upwards of sixty individuals, principally from Canada, have been imprisoned here for three weeks back; of these seven have been liberated. . . . It is said that others will be allowed to go free shortly, and this I think is not improbable; but it cannot be taken as an indication of an intention to relax in the course already determined on by the moving spirits in the "Provisional Government." Bishop Machray called on me to-day, and he evidently has not the slightest hope that anything short of the introduction of a considerable body of troops can result in restoring order, and this appears to be the prevailing opinion of the well-disposed portion of the community. Some of the most intelligent and trustworthy men I have seen, and they are now more than ever impressed with the necessity of unanimity and perfect accord among the English-speaking party, who, with very few exceptions, are well-affected to the British Crown and a large majority to the connection with Canada.

But in the present condition of matters there must

not be any hostile collision between the different parties. Nothing is more to be deprecated than this; and any influence I can exert shall certainly be given to prevent it. I am, however, not altogether without hope that more moderate and rational counsels may prevail; and that you may rest satisfied that, if apparently paying little heed to the course of events, I am very far from being idle or indifferent. But while saying so, it is impossible, with the outside influences at work, to say what complications may arise, and I feel it my duty to urge upon you, and through you to Her Majesty's Imperial Government, the necessity for being prepared at the earliest possible moment to throw in a sufficient force to crush an insurrection even at the present moment formidable, and which, before many months hence, may become so strong as, looking to the position and circumstances of the country, to offer little hope of the possibility of putting it down. Should life and property be in imminent peril and no recourse to British protection possible, I am inclined to think that with hardly a dissentient voice the law-abiding and substantial portion of the inhabitants would call on the United States Government to come to their aid, and the effect of such requisition it is needless for me to point out.

I am, etc.,

DON. A. SMITH.

On January 6, he again had a visit from Riel, and soon concluded that "no good could arise from entering into any negotiations with his 'Council,' even were he to admit their authority, which I was not prepared to do." When the Grand Vicar Thibault and Colonel de Salaberry appeared, the

"President and Council of the people," "some explanations and compliments were exchanged, after which the very reverend gentleman and his associate were politely bowed out and lost sight of."[1]

For a full fortnight after Mr. Smith's arrival there was no exact knowledge in the Settlement of his errand as Commissioner from the Canadian Government. He himself was under close surveillance, two or more guards being charged with that duty. With his brother-in-law, Mr. Hardisty, the case was otherwise and the latter began to busy himself in carrying out Mr. Smith's plan. This in effect was to secure partisans amongst the half-breeds, a delicate matter requiring much tact. Hardisty, however, was well qualified to deal with it; where promises would not serve, pecuniary bribes proved effective. Not having a large supply of cash, and unable to procure a supply of Hudson's Bay notes, he issued a sort of assignats which were redeemable at Pembina or any Company's post. These were for small amounts, rarely more than £10 sterling; but between £200 and £300 were expended in this secret fashion and as much more

[1] It is to be feared that Messrs. Thibault and Salaberry cut a rather poor figure. After doing nothing for a month the former wrote Mr. Howe: —

St. Boniface, 22d January, 1870.

Sir, — I have the honour to inform you that to-day we have been obliged to draw on Mr. John McTavish for the sum of $1000. We have nothing certain yet to say. However, all the people in general appear to give their sympathies to Canada. I learn that 1500 Fenians are *en route* to guard our frontier.

They had previously received $1000 from the Canadian Government on setting out.

promised to those Métis who would rally to Mr. Smith's support.

That support was now to be exacted. A Methodist clergyman, the Reverend John Young, has recorded in a letter written from Winnipeg on the 22d of January his astonishment that the

gentleman who landed here a few weeks ago and reported himself at Riel's headquarters as Mr. Smith, an official of the Hudson's Bay Company, and had not been outside the fort since his arrival, should suddenly have developed into a real (and if you will) "live" Commissioner, duly appointed and fully accredited by His Excellency the Governor-General of Canada! After remaining quiet for some two weeks he seems to have deemed it time to be "up and doing," and accordingly it is said he intimated to Mr. Riel that he was now under instructions to inform him that when he should have permission to do so, he had certain things to say to him from the Governor of Canada, and also certain documents at Pembina, which he would like to present. This information, I doubt not, took our little Napoleon by surprise, but as he keeps his wits generally about him, Riel directed, I understand, a guard to accompany Hardisty and bring in the papers.

Subsequently, Mr. Smith refers to these most influential and most reliable men in the Settlement who gladly made known to the people generally the liberal intentions of the Canadian Government, and in consequence one after another of Riel's councillors seceded from him, and being joined by their friends and many of their com-

patriots and co-religionists, who had throughout held aloof from the insurgents, they determined no longer to submit to his dictation. This change evidently had a marked effect upon Riel, causing him to alter his tactics and to profess a desire for an accommodation with Canada.

Accordingly, on the 14th of January, he called on me, informed me that he had seen Messrs. Thibault and De Salaberry, whose instructions did not authorize them to give assurances that the people would be secured in possession of their rights on entering into the Confederation, their errand being merely "to calm the French half-breeds." He then asked to see my commission and on my explaining that owing entirely to the action taken by himself it was not in my possession, in an excited yet faltering manner he said, "Yes, I know, 't is a great pity; but how soon could you have it?" "Probably in five or six days," I replied. "That is too long, far too long," he responded; and then asked where the documents were deposited, requesting at the same time a written order for their delivery to his messenger. To this I would not accede, but on his reassuring me that they would be delivered into my hands, and that I should be afforded an opportunity of communicating their contents to the people, I consented to send a friend for them. It was so decided, and immediately after the messenger had received his instructions from me, I was placed under strict arrest, a captain's guard being assigned me, whose instructions were not to lose sight of me, day or night, and prevent me from communicating either verbally or in writing with any individual. I protested, saying, "Am I to consider myself a prisoner?" He replied, "Cer-

tainly not; I have the utmost confidence in your honour, but circumstances demand this."

It was now about ten o'clock at night, and Mr. Hardisty having been despatched, Mr. Smith retired to bed. He was awakened between two or three o'clock in the morning by Riel, who, with a guard, stood by his bedside and again demanded a written order for the delivery of the official papers, which Smith again peremptorily refused to give.

Meanwhile the well-affected French party, made aware by Hardisty of what had happened, and "not believing in Riel's good faith, determined to prevent the papers from falling into his hands." They assembled some eighty men, who met Hardisty on his way back and were escorting him, when on the 18th of January, about ten miles from the fort, they were accosted by Riel and some of his party and by Abbé Ritchot. An altercation occurred. Riel drew a pistol, saying "he would not be taken alive in his own country," on which a weapon was levelled at his own head, which had a salutary effect. Abbé Ritchot having interposed, was unceremoniously told to stand aside and "not to interfere with matters unconnected with his spiritual duties."[1]

[1] Major Boulton, whose life was saved through Mr. Smith's intercession says: "The whole party returned to Fort Garry together; and Hardisty was conducted to the Council Chambers. Mr. Smith came there to receive the papers, and in handing them to Mr. Smith, O'Donohue, a member of Riel's 'Provisional Government,' attempted to snatch them, but Mr. Grant drew his revolver and prevented this. The scene, as described to me, was an exciting one. For Riel and his Council were anxious to get the papers, so as to deprive Mr. Smith of any authority before the people; and it required a great deal of planning on Mr. Smith's part to get possession of them."

Mr. Smith reported that all those who took part in this affair were Roman Catholics, and, with one or two exceptions, French half-breeds. Violence being averted, the whole party proceeded to Fort Garry, where they arrived in the forenoon. A few minutes before they entered the house, Père Thibault, Père Lestanc, and Colonel de Salaberry called upon Commissioner Smith, being the first, with the exception of his guard, with whom he had been permitted to converse for four days. Mr. Smith says: —

They appeared much concerned, and said it was currently reported I had been endeavouring to incite the different parties to hostile collisions. I repudiated any such charge, explaining that I had acted only in the cause of peace and order, and with the desire of making the people, both French and English, fully acquainted with the liberal views of the Canadian Government, so that a peaceful transfer of the Territory might be effected, adding that I was pleased to think there was every likelihood this would speedily be accomplished.

In the mean time, the party in possession of my papers entered the adjoining room, in which Père Lestanc joined them, while Messrs. Thibault and De Salaberry went outside. Immediately after they retired, Mr. Riel came to me, saying, "Your commission is here, but in the hands of men who had no right to have it." I expressed satisfaction that it had been brought in, and said, now being in possession of it, I must be relieved from all restraint, and be permitted freely to communicate with the people. He at once removed the guard, and we went up to the party who

had just arrived. Messrs. Riel and O'Donohue, with a few of their friends were present, and vehemently protested against the action now being taken, while the ex-Councillors accused them of treason to the Imperial Crown, and of using every effort to bring about the annexation of the country to the United States. Riel replied that was only supposing the people desired it, but that he was willing the question should be submitted to them. Père Lestanc spoke warmly in favour of the "President" [Riel], who, he said, had acted so as to merit the gratitude of his countrymen, and begged them still to place confidence in him. This evidently had no effect, and ultimately, after a good deal of recrimination, it was arranged that a meeting of the inhabitants from all parts of the Settlement should be called for the morrow, the 19th, at which the papers bearing on the subject should be read, a guard of forty men remaining in the house to ensure the safe-keeping of the documents.

Riel's men were now falling away from him, while the loyal party expressed their determination no longer to be guided in the matter either by him or by Père Lestanc and his associates, *but at the same time spoke warmly of their attachment to the Reverend Mr. Thibault and complained of the restraint imposed upon him.*[1] They were full of hope and confident that the following day would bring with it complete success to the cause of Canada.

That night, or rather about three o'clock in the morning of the 17th, Père Lestanc[2] visited them and

[1] Deleted from *Report* as printed.

[2] Miss Katherine Hughes, a well-informed writer on the North-West and author of a *Life* of Father Lacombe, writes me: —

"Père Lestanc has been treated with such scandalous unfairness by certain writers on that period that we, who write history more

most unfortunately the Grand Vicar Thibault accompanied him, I felt convinced against his own better judgment, for I believe him to be a truly honourable man, but wanting in resolution to withstand the pressure put upon him.[1] Their visit occupied three or four hours and resulted in the defection of a majority of the party, which of course had its effect on many outside. This we felt to be a bad blow, but, notwithstanding, it was determined to go on with the meeting which had been convened for noon that day.

The hour for the meeting having arrived and Colonel de Salaberry not yet on the ground, I sent a friend and afterwards despatched a note to him, expressing hope that by his presence he would countenance the proceedings on the part of Canada. He at length came, accompanied by Reverend Mr. Thibault and I begged they would be good enough to take places with me on the platform and requested Colonel de Salaberry to act as interpreter, so that the contents of the several documents and any observations made in English might be faithfully translated to the French party. He kindly promised to do so, but perhaps feeling some diffidence

impartially, now owe him some amends. He was sacrificed by Bishop Taché in those days, who, while loving him as all did who knew his sincerity and good heart, sent him West because of the uncomprehending clamour of the newcomers. Or, to put it more correctly, he — Lestanc — made the sacrifice himself. For years Père Lestanc would not break his silence about that period. He opposed Lord Strathcona then on certain points. He did so fairly and openly and as one who knew and loved the Red River people. And I feel sure as years went by Lord Strathcona in the light of fuller knowledge looked on that period and its characters with different eyes. I know, at least, how the Red River people judged the two, and I sincerely trust, as a lover of the West and its early people, that your book will at least do justice to both of them."

[1] These allusions to Père Thibault, Mr. Smith subsequently, as we shall see, deleted from his *Report*.

in himself, which I endeavoured to overcome, he proposed that Mr. Riel should be appointed interpreter and this was carried before the meeting had time to reflect on the import of the motion. This had a most damaging effect on the cause of order; but I am very far from saying that it was premeditated on the part of Colonel de Salaberry, although I feel it to be a duty to state the facts.[1]

Never before in the history of the British Empire was a public meeting held under such conditions as that which took place at Fort Garry on the 19th of January, 1870. It would be difficult indeed to find an historical parallel, even in the assembly of Polish patriots in the public square of Warsaw in 1830, the out-of-doors deliberations of the Moscow Patriotic Committee in the winter of 1812, the memorable gathering in Podolia in 1786, or in the open-air congregations of the Jesuits of New France as narrated in the pages of Parkman. These did not equal in dramatic force the present scene, which furnished, besides, a striking object lesson in Anglo-Celtic manners, in English traditions of free speech, in sheer physical endurance.

In the open, with the thermometer registering twenty degrees below zero; in the teeth of a biting blast, this meeting was conducted with a decorum and respect for ancient parliamentary usages worthy of Westminster Palace itself. "Icicles," it is said, "hung on men's beards; and the features of many of the aged in that vast sea of faces were pinched and blue with cold."

[1] Deleted from *Report.*

Out of the precincts of the fort four or five men emerged and stepped out upon the small platform, flanked by two tumbrils, known locally as "Red River carts."

First came Louis Riel, President of the "Provisional Government." His eyes burnt with a strange brightness; his dark skin was overshot with pallor, his lips sternly compressed. At sight of him a cheer arose from the French and half-breeds, men of his own race — a cheer half-Indian, half-Highland, not at all a French acclamation. Some of the Scotch and English settlers feebly joined in the applause, perhaps through policy. They did not know yet what to make of Riel. Some openly admired him; many were afraid. At his side stood O'Donohue, the recreant priest; next was Colonel de Salaberry, who bore a name honoured by millions of his fellow-countrymen. By his side strode confidently a man whose face was unfamiliar to the whole of those present. He was destined soon to be known by all. This was Commissioner Smith, at whose request the meeting had been summoned.

At the commencement of the meeting he requested the Chairman (Mr. Bunn) to "insist that all arms should be laid down and that the flag then flying [the fleur-de-lis and shamrock] should be replaced by the British ensign." No motion to this effect was made: it would, the Chairman thought, "come better at an after stage." The "opportunity thus lost never recurred," and the flag of the Provisional Government flew unchallenged until Colonel Wolseley's arrival eight months later.

The Queen's Proclamation

Mr. Smith began by reading his commission, to which the signature "John Young" (afterwards Lord Lisgar) was appended.

"Who is John Young?" cried Riel contemptuously. Mr. Smith explained that it was the name of the Governor-General.

"Why," demanded Riel, "is it not signed 'Governor'?"

Amidst constant interruptions Mr. Smith proceeded to read out the Queen's message which had come to the Canadian Government through Lord Granville: —

The Queen has heard with surprise and regret that certain misguided persons have banded together to oppose by force the entry of the future Lieutenant-Governor into our Territory in Red River. Her Majesty does not mistrust the loyalty of persons in that Settlement, and can only ascribe to misunderstanding or misrepresentation their opposition to a change planned for their advantage.

She relies on your Government to use every effort to explain whatever misunderstanding may have arisen — to ascertain their wants and conciliate the good-will of the people of the Red River Settlement. But in the mean time she authorizes you to signify to them the sorrow and displeasure with which she views the unreasonable and lawless proceedings that have taken place; and her expectation that if any parties have desires to express, or complaints to make respecting their condition and prospects, they will address themselves to the Governor-General of Canada.

The Queen expects from her representative that, as he will be always ready to receive well-founded griev-

ances, so will he exercise the power and authority she entrusted to him in the support of order and the suppression of unlawful disturbances.

At this meeting and that held the following day, the reading of every document was contested with much obstinacy. Says Mr. Smith: "Threats were freely used to myself in the presence and hearing of the chairman, his secretary, and others, more especially Mr. Riel and Père Lestanc."

In concluding his own remarks, Mr. Smith said: "I am here to-day in the interests of Canada, but only so far as they are in accordance with the interest of this country. Under no other circumstances would I have consented to act. As to the Hudson's Bay Company, my connection with that body is, I suppose, generally known; but I will say that if it could do any possible good to this country, I would, at this moment, resign my position in that Company. I sincerely hope that my humble efforts may, in some measure, contribute to bring about, peaceably, union and entire accord among all classes of the people of this country."

The result of the meeting was the appointment of forty delegates, twenty from each side, to meet on the 25th of January, "with the object of considering the subject of Mr. Smith's commission and to decide what would be best for the welfare of the country." The English as a body and a large number of the French declared their entire satisfaction with the explanations given, and their earnest desire for union with Canada.

His Counsel disregarded

On the 22d, "President" Riel had several conferences within the fort with the well-affected Métis; he shed tears freely and told them how earnestly he desired an arrangement with Canada. He assured them that he would lay down his authority immediately on the meeting of the Convention. They believed him sincere, and, although Mr. Smith considered that their precautions should not be diminished, it was considered that ten men would be amply sufficient to leave while they went to conduct the elections. The consequence was that they had hardly gone when repressive measures were resorted to, and the Hudson's Bay stores, which until now had only partially been in his hands, were taken complete possession of by Riel.[1]

[1] On the 10th, Governor Mactavish had written to the Secretary of the Hudson's Bay Company: —

"Mr. Chief Factor Donald A. Smith is also here; but it seems very doubtful if he will be received as a Commissioner from Canada. He is, and has been since his arrival, prevented from going outside the establishment."

Again, on the 22d of January, he wrote:—

"Since writing to you on the 10th instant, Mr. Donald A. Smith has brought in from Pembina where he left them on his way here, the various documents connected with his mission as Commissioner, and read them before a large meeting of the people of this place. Generally this appears to have given satisfaction; but Mr. Riel thinks that the papers should have been submitted to himself and Council for their approval.

"The result of the meeting was that the Roman Catholic portion of the Settlement should elect twenty representatives to meet with an equal number from the Protestant portion, and jointly in Council consider Mr. Smith's authority, and if satisfied he had the power, to make with him an arrangement securing to settlers here such rights as were considered due them previously, but with a view to the establishment of the authority of the Dominion of Canada here.

"This seemed very satisfactory to all parties, and till this morning I had every hope that all difficulties would be got over. But Mr. Riel

Efforts which were made to have the prisoners released for the present proved futile.

Donald A. Smith to the Honourable Joseph Howe

FORT GARRY, 25th January, 1870.

SIR: —

Up to this date I have not deemed it advisable to address you officially in my capacity as Commissioner from the Canadian Government with reference to the affairs of the Red River Settlement.

With regard to matters which transpired from the date of my arrival here, the 27th ult., until the 14th inst., little need be said. In explanation of what follows, it will be necessary that I inform you that I brought with me into the Territory neither my letter of authorization nor any other official documents delivered to me in Ottawa, as I wished only to express myself in the first instance merely as an officer of the Hudson's Bay Company, and to be in a position to say, in good faith, that I was in possession of no papers

this forenoon entered Dr. Cowan's house and in the presence of a number of people, a few of whom were opposed to him, violently abused the Hudson's Bay Company and its officers, and, among other things, says that the Company must be struck down; demanded the keys of the shop, which he said must hereafter remain in the hands of one of his people, though I think as yet he has not enforced his demand, but he may do it at any moment. I have still some hopes that something may come from the meeting of delegates called together on Tuesday, the 25th instant, but they are feeble compared with those I had yesterday.

"It is unfortunate also that the Commissioner should have been a servant of the Company. The Reverend Mr. Thibault and Colonel de Salaberry preceded Mr. Smith; but they had no power to make arrangements, and as no doubt will be urged, were simply sent to make the way smooth for Mr. Smith, though I have no doubt the idea is incorrect."

bearing on the subject which has caused so much excitement in the Settlement for some months back.

This assurance I gave to Mr. Riel and his Council immediately on my arrival; but at the same time intimated to him in a perfectly straightforward manner that if the people were willing to receive me as a Commissioner from Canada, I would be able to appear before them in that position in a short time. Mr. Riel and party requested me to take an oath that I would take no active steps to restore the Government of the Hudson's Bay Company, or to effect the transfer to Canada, and on peremptorily declining this they accepted my terms on honour that I would not take steps to upset them until I had advised them of my intention to the contrary.

Some days later they declined to receive me as a Commissioner, and matters remained in this condition till the evening of the 14th instant, when Mr. Riel called on me and said he carried no enmity and after some conversation between us it was agreed that I should be accepted as Commissioner. I immediately took steps to have my official papers brought in from Pembina; but in the mean time a party of French Canadians and French half-breeds, being under the impression that Mr. Riel's object was to secure and retain or destroy these documents, resolved to intercept the messenger. They acted accordingly, and on the 18th arrived in the fort and delivered the papers into my hands and insisted that I should at once make known their contents, that the people might become informed of the intention of the Dominion Government. Mr. Riel protested against the information being made public, and I also advised delay until a full attendance of all classes concerned could be obtained.

It was ultimately arranged that a meeting of the inhabitants should be convened for the following day, the 19th. A strong party of French remained in the Hudson's Bay Company's House within the fort, which still remained in possession of Mr. Riel's party, to insure against the seizure of the papers. At noon on the 19th, upwards of 1000 people, French and English, assembled within the fort, and after much protest on the part of Riel and his friends, my letter of authorization and several other documents were read by me to the people. At a late hour the meeting was adjourned until the following day, and the reading of the papers was then continued. At one time, armed men appeared on the ground and threats were freely used to me personally and to some other individuals, but this simply with a view to preventing the information coming to the public.[1]

[1] "When he reached Fort Garry, Mr. Smith was virtually made prisoner; Riel would not allow him to go outside the fort and kept an eye on his correspondence. In January, 1870, a mass meeting was held at Fort Garry and Mr. Smith was allowed to state his case and tell what he wanted the people to do. Riel was present together with O'Donohue and other insurrectionaries. When Mr. Smith got up to read his commission from Sir John Young, most of those present expected to see him arrested and shot on the spot. As it was he had a stormy time; but managed to impress many of the hot-headed with the belief that the interests of the Settlement would be properly safeguarded by Canada. Riel was afraid of Mr. Smith's influence, and at once hurried preparations for having himself made President of a Provisional Government. Then came the wholesale arrests culminating in the murder of Thomas Scott. Mr. Smith risked his life in an attempt to save Scott. Notwithstanding Riel's antipathy to him he went boldly to Riel and pleaded for Scott, even going so far as to warn Riel that if Scott were shot his blood would be upon his head. Riel was intoxicated with power and more than half disposed to shoot others on the loyal side, but Mr. Smith told him to his teeth that such a crime would not go unpunished.

"In the discussions that took place over the Bill of Rights to be sent to Ottawa the chief part was borne by Mr. Smith. His coolness

The Convention deliberates

Ultimately a resolution was carried unanimously, that forty delegates, twenty from either side, should be elected to meet in the Court-House to-day with the object of "considering the subject of Mr. Smith's commission," and to decide what would be best for the welfare of the country. These delegates are now in session, and I expect every moment to be invited to meet them. What the result of the meeting may be it is impossible to say, but it is believed on all hands that the publicity given to the views of the Canadian Government in the action already taken, will be productive of good.[1]

The Convention resumed its sessions on the 25th,[2] and continued till the 10th of February. On the 27th,

and sagacity undoubtedly prevented the collapse of the negotiations. 'This man Smith,' said O'Donohue at one stage, 'knows too much for us; he is too able for us. We must get rid of him or the North-West cannot be made either an independent republic or part of the United States. He is a Hudson's Bay Company officer, and as such a friend of the half-breeds, and will be able to persuade them that union with Canada is to their interest.' It is a wonder all along that Mr. Smith was not shot. He was warned often enough that his life was in danger, but he seemed quite willing to risk it in behalf of the cause he represented." (*Statement concerning the Red River Insurrection*, by Dr. William O'Donnell.) I have heard similar language from other old pioneers, notably Sheriff Colin Inkster.

[1] Meanwhile Sir John Macdonald, his anxiety increasing daily, and far from sanguine as to the possibility of Mr. Smith's fulfilling his mission, was moving heaven and earth to induce Monseigneur Taché, then in Rome attending an Œcumenical Congress, to hasten back to his diocese.

[2] *Sir John Young to Earl Granville*

OTTAWA, February 15th, 1870.

Convention half English, half French, met on 25th January. Proceedings opened by loyal speech from Riel. Smith took part as Canadian Commissioner. After three days' discussion joint committee appointed to draw up new modified Bill of Rights. Ample time to be allowed Dominion to consider terms. Appearances highly satisfactory.

I attended the Convention by appointment. I was received with much cordiality by all the delegates, explained to them the view of the Canadian Government, and gave assurances that on entering the Confederation, they would be secured in the possession of all rights, privileges, and immunities enjoyed by British subjects in other parts of the Dominion.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your obedient servant,
DON. A. SMITH.

THE HON. JOSEPH HOWE,
Secretary of State for the Provinces.

What Mr. Smith said was thus reported:—

My belief is that the Canadian Government has no intention of imposing on the North-West Territory the payment of any portion of the £300,000; and I have so much confidence that they will be actuated, in every respect, by wise and just motives, that in arranging for the distribution of the public debt of Canada, the North-West Territory will not be held liable for anything unfair; in short, that here, as in every other particular, substantial justice will be done. Having gone through the articles may I now be permitted to say a few words? Your list is not only long, but contains many things of great importance. In coming here first, I had no idea of it, nor had the Canadian Government. However, I was authorized by them, as Commissioner, to do what, in my judgment, might appear best in the state of public affairs here. It was thought, at the time, that there might be some points raised with which I really could not deal personally with any satisfaction to the people of the country. This being the case, and looking at the suggestion put forward by the Very Reverend the Grand Vicar, with

reference to a delegation from this country to Canada, I have now, on the part of the Dominion Government, — and as authorized by them, — to invite a delegation of the residents of Red River to meet and confer with them at Ottawa, — a delegation of two or more of the residents of Red River, — as they may think best, — the delegation to confer with the Government and Legislature, and explain the wants and wishes of the Red River people, as well as to discuss and arrange for the representation of the country in Parliament. I feel that, this being the case, it is less necessary for me to deal very particularly with these matters. On the part of the Government, I am authorized to offer a very cordial reception to the delegates who may be sent from this country to Canada. I myself feel confident that the result will be such as will be entirely satisfactory to the people of the North-West. I know the desire of the Canadian Government that it should be so.[1]

On being requested by Mr. Riel to give an opinion regarding a certain "List of Rights," prepared by his party in December last, I declined to do so, thinking it better that the present Convention should place in my hands a paper, stating their wishes, to which I should be happy to give such answers as I believed would be in accordance with the views of the Canadian Government.[2] The Convention then set about the task of

[1] Speech at Convention as reported in the *New Nation*. February 11.

[2] *Mr. Riel.* "You are embarrassed. I see you are a gentleman and do not wish to press you. I see that the Canadian Government has not given you all the confidence which they ought to have put in your hands. At the same time we will hear your opinion, although we are satisfied you cannot grant us, nor guarantee us anything by the nature of your commission." (Report of meeting, *New Nation*, February 11.)

preparing a "List of Rights" embodying the conditions on which they would be willing to enter the Confederation. While the discussion regarding this list was going on, Mr. Riel called on me and asked if the Canadian Government would consent to receive them as a Province. My reply was, that I could not speak with any degree of certainty on the subject, as it had not been referred to when I was at Ottawa, the intention then being that the North-West should, in the first instance, be incorporated under the Dominion as a Territory; but I added that no doubt it would become a Province within two or three years. On this Mr. Riel, with much emphasis, exclaimed, "Then the Hudson's Bay Company is not safe yet," to which I answered, "Mr. Riel, that cannot influence me in the slightest degree, and I am quite prepared to act as may be required of me in my capacity as Canadian Commissioner."

On the following day, the 4th of February, the proposition to enter as a Province was negatived by the Convention, and on the 5th, another motion, directed against the Hudson's Bay Company, also failed; the language used by Mr. Riel on the latter occasion having been violent in the extreme.

The same evening, Riel proceeded to Governor Mactavish, who had been dangerously ill for many weeks back, and was then barely able to sit up, placed a guard over him, and heaping reproaches and insult on him, declared that he would have him shot before midnight. Riel then sought out Dr. Cowan, the officer in immediate charge of Red River district, upbraided him for his persistent opposition to "the People," the insurgents, and declaring that his name would go down with infamy to posterity for the part he had taken,

demanded that he would immediately swear allegiance to the Provisional Government, or prepare for death within three hours, giving him a quarter of an hour for consideration. The Doctor immediately replied that he knew no legal authority in the country but that of Great Britain to which his allegiance was due, and that he would not take the oath required of him. He was then seized and put in confinement along with the prisoners taken in December last. I was also put under strict guard, but not removed from the house.

The narrative continues:—

Notwithstanding this, and the painful doubt created in the minds of the English members of the Convention as to the course they should pursue after these arrests, the delegates again met on the 7th. On the 5th, they had resolved to place in my hands the List of Rights they had drawn up, which was done at 11 o'clock on the 7th with an intimation that the Convention would be glad to meet me at 1 o'clock P.M., the intervening two hours being allowed me to frame my answers. In drawing up these, I was allowed no reference to any document, either written or printed, except the List of Rights, and a guard stood over me to see that I should write nothing else than that to be presented to the Convention. I had just finished writing when Mr. Riel and his "Adjutant-General" Lépine, who was also a member of the Convention, came in, and Riel, looking at the latter in a significant manner, said, "The answers to the List of Rights must be simply 'yes' or 'no.'" On this, I remarked that I thought otherwise and would act as circumstances might appear to me to require. I then retired, and, on returning to the room a few minutes later, found there Mr. Riel, the Reverend

Mr. Thibault, and Colonel de Salaberry. We proceeded together to the Convention, and in course of conversation Colonel de Salaberry said he would gladly have come to see me before, but could not, as he "had been a prisoner throughout."[1]

Donald A. Smith to the Honourable Joseph Howe

Fort Garry, 12th February, 1870.

Sir: —

I send you to-day the *New Nation* newspaper of the 11th instant covering the proceedings of the Convention of Delegates since the date of the last letter I had the honour of addressing you.

The part taken by me in the proceedings referred to is pretty correctly reported and I trust it may be satisfactory to your Government, and if not quite what it ought to be, some allowances may perhaps be made for the very exceptional circumstances under which my answers are drawn up, only two hours having been allowed me for this purpose, while I had to write under

[1] On the 12th of February, Governor Mactavish wrote to the Company's London Secretary: —

"The outrages to which the Company's people here have been exposed at the hands of Riel and his people are greater than you probably would believe. His imprisonment of Dr. Cowan and myself was doubtless meant to intimidate opposition by holding us as hostages."

And again, on the 6th of April, 1870, to the same: —

"It is now fully three weeks since rumours first reached me that the time had been fixed at which, in the event of non-compliance with the terms to be prepared by Riel, the Company's people in Red River district were to be turned out of their forts, and all property, whether personal to themselves or belonging to the Company, confiscated. I feel that my compliance with their demands on behalf of the Company affords our only chance of avoiding immediate inevitable destruction."

the eye of a guard, who received instructions in my presence from Mr. Riel not to permit any communication with me while I was thus occupied, and to see, further, that I should write nothing else than might appear on the sheets then before me, and which were not to be removed from the table.

After giving my views as to what the Government would be willing to concede to the people of this Settlement, I intimated to the Convention that I had been authorized to invite a delegation of at least two residents to proceed to Ottawa for the purpose of conferring with the Dominion Government as to the affairs of this country, and on the 8th instant a new resolution of the Convention was handed to me, copy of which I now beg to enclose. The gentlemen nominated as delegates are John Black, Esq., Judge, Reverend Mr. Ritchot, and Mr. Alfred H. Scott, clerk to Mr. McKenny, and I presume they will leave for Canada in the course of the ensuing week. I may probably precede them by a few days, if at all possible to get away so soon.

While I write, Mr. Riel has called on Dr. Cowan, the Hudson's Bay Company's officer in immediate charge, to intimate that we must at once, that is, this afternoon, leave the house in which we now reside, and in view of this you will readily excuse me for closing somewhat abruptly.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

Don. A. Smith.

A large majority of the delegates expressed entire satisfaction with the Commissioner's answers to their List of Rights, and professed confidence in the Canadian Government, to which he invited them

to send delegates, with the view to effecting a speedy transfer of the territory to the Dominion, an invitation received with acclamation and unanimously accepted. The delegates named were the Recorder, John Black, the Reverend Mr. Ritchot, and Alfred H. Scott. A considerable opposition was offered to the election of the last-named of the trio; but it was ineffectual.

The proceedings of the Convention terminated on the 10th of February, by the nomination of a Provincial Government, in the formation of which several delegates declined to take any part. Governor Mactavish, Dr. Cowan, and two or three other persons were then released and the Hudson's Bay Company officers allowed to come and go at pleasure, but Commissioner Smith was still confined to the fort; Riel, as he expressly stated to Judge Black, being apprehensive of his influence with the people of the Settlement in the coming election.[1]

At this juncture occurred a most unhappy circumstance. On the nights of the 14th and 15th of February, some eighty to one hundred men from Portage la Prairie, a prominent post lying between the Red River and Lake Winnipegosis, a great lake

[1] Dr. Schultz afterwards said of his followers: "They sent a messenger to Mr. Riel telling him that if he did not release all the prisoners in his charge he would be at once attacked. Within an hour the prisoners were released, and the question then came up as to whether to go on and attack Fort Garry or not. While a large number were willing, after having accomplished the principal object for which they were assembled, namely, the release of the prisoners, to go on and attack Fort Garry and drive Riel out, many others said, 'No, we will not pull a trigger for the sake of saving the Hudson's Bay Company's rum and pemmican which Riel and his men are destroying.'" (*Parliamentary Debates*, April 2, 1875.)

only second in size in the district to Winnipeg, to which it is parallel, passed down close to Fort Garry, where they were joined by about three hundred and fifty other persons, principally English half-breeds from the lower parts of the Settlement. Had this force, properly armed and organized, been prepared to support the well-affected French party when the latter took action about the middle of January, or even in the middle of February, during the sitting of the Convention, order might have been restored, and the transfer to Canada provided for without the necessity of firing a single shot. But now the rising was not only rash but purposeless, as without its intervention the prisoners would unquestionably have been released. The party was entirely unorganized, indifferently armed, unprovided with food, even for one meal, and wholly incapable of coping with the French, now reunited, who to the number of at least seven hundred were prepared to offer the most determined resistance, which, as they were in possession of a number of guns (six- and three-pounders), ample stores of ammunition, provisions, and every other requisite, they could have done most effectually.

Mr. Smith states that his sympathies were, in great measure, with these Portage men, whom he believed to have been actuated by the best of motives; but under the circumstances it was not difficult to foresee that the issue could not be otherwise than disastrous to their cause. The attempt was therefore to be deplored, as it resulted in placing the whole Settlement at the feet of Riel. By the

great majority of settlers, English and Scotch, the movement was deprecated. However, forty-seven of the party were captured on their way home while passing within a few hundred yards of the fort. It was said that their reason for taking so dangerous a route, instead of making a détour, which should have insured safety, was a supposed promise by Riel that they would be permitted to pass unmolested. Riel, on being asked beforehand if the party would be permitted to pass, was silent, and only on being informed that they intended next day to use the route just outside the town remarked, "Ah, that is good!" For his purpose, relates the Commissioner grimly, no doubt it was so.[1]

Captain Boulton led the party, and he and his friends at the Portage assured me that he exerted himself to the utmost to keep them from rising, and only joined them at the last moment when he saw they were determined to go forward. He was captured on the 17th, tried by court-martial, and condemned to be shot at noon on the following day; but at the intercession of the Lord Bishop of Rupert's Land, Archdeacon McLean, and, in short, every influential man among the English, and, I have been told, also at the earnest entreaty of the Catholic clergy, the execution was delayed till midnight of Saturday the 19th. Further than this, Riel declared he could not, would not yield, except, indeed, Dr. Schultz should be captured in the mean time, in which case he would be shot instead of Boulton.

Archdeacon McLean had been in close attendance on Captain Boulton for twenty-four hours, had admin-

[1] *Report.*

istered to him the Sacrament, received his last commands, and had promised to be present with him at the last moment; and when I met the Archdeacon on my way to see Riel, about eight o'clock on the evening of the 19th, he was deeply affected, and had given up all hope.

I found with Riel Mr. H. N. Robinson, of the *New Nation* newspaper, and shortly afterwards Mr. James Ross, Chief Justice, entered, followed in a few minutes by Mr. Bannatyne, Postmaster, who had been ordered to bring the key of the mail-bag, which Riel opened, and examining the letters, perused and retained one or more.

Mr. Ross pleaded for Boulton, but was repulsed in the most contemptuous manner. I had already been speaking to Riel on the subject when interrupted by Mr. Ross's entrance, and now resumed the conversation. Riel was obdurate, and said that the English settlers and Canadians, but more especially the latter, had laughed at and despised the French half-breeds, believing that they would not dare to take the life of any one, and that under these circumstances it would be impossible to have peace and establish order in the country. An example must therefore be made, and he had firmly resolved that Boulton's execution should be carried out, bitterly as he deplored the necessity for doing so. I reasoned with him long and earnestly, until at length, about ten o'clock, he yielded, and addressing me, apparently with much feeling, said, "Hitherto I have been deaf to all entreaties, and in now granting you this man's life," or words to that effect, "may I ask you a favour?" "Anything," I replied, "that in honour I can do." He continued: "Canada has disunited us; will you use your influence to unite us? You

can do so, and without this it must be war — bloody civil war!" I answered that, as I had on first coming to the country, I would now repeat, "I would give my whole heart to effect a peaceable union of the country with Canada."

"We want only our just rights as British subjects," he continued, "and we want the English to join us simply to obtain these." "Then," I remarked, "I shall at once see them and induce them to go on with the election of delegates for that purpose." And he replied, "If you can do this, war will be avoided. Not only the lives but the liberty of all the prisoners will be secured, for on your success depend the lives of all the Canadians in the country."

Riel immediately proceeded to the prison and intimated to Archdeacon McLean that he had been induced by Mr. Smith to spare Captain Boulton's life, and had further promised that immediately on the meeting of the Council shortly to be elected the whole of the prisoners should be released, requesting the Archdeacon at the same time to explain these circumstances to Captain Boulton and the other prisoners.

The moment was a critical one for the Settlement. Every man's life was in the hands of Riel, and fully appreciating the significance of this, the Bishop of Rupert's Land and the Protestant clergy generally now earnestly counselled the people to elect their delegates without loss of time, as by this means they might to some extent control the course of events, while otherwise they were utterly powerless.

Touring the Settlement

James Ross to Donald A. Smith

Monday Morning, 20th February, 1870.

Dear Sir, — On further consideration, I am satisfied that the mission projected for to-day will be much more successful if you alone undertake it. My course at the Convention, which the people below highly disapproved of as being too friendly to the French, would not only render valueless anything I might urge, but perhaps even help to intensify the feeling against union. So satisfied am I of this, that in the public interest I must refrain from taking part in the mission.

I am, Sir,

Yours faithfully,

James Ross.

Archdeacon McLean having offered to accompany Mr. Smith, they visited the different parts of the Settlement, and found that in several parishes the people and those most loyal to the British Crown and most desirous for union with Canada had already chosen their councillors. Mr. Smith says: —

I explained to all that the Council was to be provisional, in the strictest sense of the word, intended expressly for effecting the transference of the country to Canada, and for insuring the safety of life and property in the mean time. In some instances I found they had drawn up petitions to Mr. Riel, as "President," expressing submission, etc. These I requested them to destroy, advising that nothing more should be done than under the circumstances was absolutely necessary, namely, that having made their election, they should simply intimate the fact in formal terms to

Mr. Bunn, who had been named Secretary of the Council, and not to Mr. Riel. The elections in the English parishes having taken place on the 26th of February, I again saw Riel, who reassured me that all the prisoners would be released within a day or two after the first meeting of the Council. On the 28th he again sent for me, and in the presence of Mr. Fraser, delegate from the Scotch parish, Kildonan, repeated his promise that the lives of the prisoners were secured, and that their release would shortly follow.[1]

I had no further communication with Riel until Monday, the 4th of March, when about ten o'clock in the morning Père Lestanc called on me. He informed me of Bishop Taché's expected arrival, — not later certainly than the 8th, and probably some days earlier, — adding that his lordship had telegraphed to request that if about to leave for Canada I should defer my departure until he could communicate with me personally. He then said that the "conduct of the prisoners was very unsatisfactory, that they were unruly, insolent to the 'soldiers,' and their behaviour alto-

[1] From a manuscript, *Red River Journal*, kept by T. S. [Thomas Spence], in the Dominion Archives:—

February 21st, Monday. Riel desired that Mr. D. Smith should go to see the English settlers about uniting, which Smith agreed to do; and he has gone down with Henry McDermott to see and urge upon the people the necessity of union.

February 24th. Donald G. Smith [*sic*] and Archdeacon McLean are up the Portage way to induce people to unite. Hope it will do good.

February 26th. D. G. Smith returned from Portage with McLean. Whole Settlement now has joined Provisional Government.

February 28th. Riel took possession of all the keys of the fort. (On the furs being counted it was found there were 18,500 martins worth 14 shillings each.)

March 16th. D. A. Smith with H. McDermott went down to see Judge Black.

April 9th. Company resumes business.

gether so very bad that he was afraid the guards might be forced to retaliate in self-defence." I expressed much surprise at the information he gave, as the prisoners, without exception, had promised to Archbishop McLean and myself that, seeing their helpless condition, they would endeavour to act so as to avoid giving offence to their guards, and we encouraged them to look forward to be speedily released in fulfilment of the promise made by Mr. Riel. One man, Parker, was mentioned as having made himself particularly obnoxious by his violent conduct; but not one word was said on this occasion regarding Scott, or the slightest intimation given that he or any other person had been condemned to be shot. About eleven o'clock Père Lestanc left me and went upstairs to communicate to Governor Mactavish, as he said, "the good news that Bishop Taché was expected so soon." The Reverend Mr. Young, Methodist clergyman, had just entered the house, and meeting the Père in the hall, conversed with him a few minutes. Mr. Young then came up to me, and from him I had the first intimation that it was intended to shoot Thomas Scott, and that the sentence was to be carried into effect at twelve o'clock noon that day. We agreed in believing that the thing was too monstrous to be possible, and Mr. Young mentioned that poor Scott was himself equally incredulous on the subject, thinking they merely intended to frighten him. However, even to keep him in suspense was of itself a horrible cruelty, and it was arranged that, as Mr. Young had been sent for to attend the man, he should see Riel, ascertain exactly how the matter stood, and if really serious to let me know at once. Mr. Young accordingly called on Riel, was informed that Scott had been condemned, that the sentence was irrevoca-

ble, and would not be delayed one minute beyond noon. Mr. Young begged for delay, saying, "the man is not prepared to die"; but all without avail. He was paralyzed with horror, returned to the prisoner, and immediately sent a messenger to inform me of the result of his visit. I determined to find out Riel immediately, but recollecting that Père Lestanc was still upstairs with Mr. Mactavish, went up to him, related what I had heard, and asked him if he knew anything about the matter. His answer I cannot give in precise words, but it was to the effect that they had seen Mr. Riel on the other side [St. Boniface] and had all spoken to him about it, by which I understood that they had interceded for Scott. Governor Mactavish was greatly shocked on being informed of Riel's purpose, and joined in reprobating it.

Père Lestanc consented to accompany me, and we called on Riel. When we entered, he asked me, "What news from Canada?" the mail having arrived the previous day, and I replied, "Only the intelligence that Bishop Taché will be here very soon." I then mentioned what I had heard regarding Scott, and before Riel answered, Père Lestanc interposed in French, "Is there no way of escape?" Riel replied to him, "Mon Père, you know exactly how the matter stands"; then turning to me, he said, "I will explain to you," speaking at first in English, but shortly afterwards using the French, remarking, "You understand that language?" He said in substance that Scott had been throughout a troublesome character, had been the ringleader in a rising against Mr. Snow, who had charge of the party employed by the Canadian Government during the preceding summer in roadmaking; that he had risen against the "Provisional Govern-

ment" in December last; that his life was then spared; that he escaped, had again been taken in arms, and once more pardoned, referring, no doubt, to the promise he had made to me; that the lives and liberty of all the prisoners were secured, but that he was incorrigible and quite incapable of appreciating the clemency with which he had been treated; that he was rough and abusive to the guards and insulting to him, Mr. Riel; that his example had been productive of the very worst effects on the other prisoners, who had become insubordinate to such an extent that it was difficult to withhold the guards from retaliating.[1]

[1] *Louis Riel to Donald A. Smith*

DAKOTAH TERRITORY,
February 12th, 1874.

You yourself will recall that when, on February 17th, Boulton was captured with 47 men, bearing arms under the walls of Fort Garry, Scott was amongst them, and was thus captured a second time. When imprisoned for his attempt against the authority of the Provisional Government he was distinguished by his violent conduct On March 1st, Scott and a fellow-prisoner forced the doors of their prison and called upon the rest to attack the guards. This time he was overpowered, but the Métis, knowing how kindly Scott had been treated, were so indignant at this violence that they laid hands upon him and would have avenged themselves on the spot, but for the intervention of one of the Council. It was lastly demanded that this man should be brought before a court-martial. I intervened, he was summoned before me, when I urged him to behave himself, and to promise that he would give no more trouble, so as to justify me in clemency, and in refusing to yield to the express wishes of the Métis. Scott replied with contempt and refused to behave himself as a prisoner, so that he was seen to constitute a danger to the government and the peace of the Settlement.

Consequently, as every means had failed, the 3d of March, this man Scott was brought before the Council of War. Witnesses having been heard made oath, he was solemnly convicted of treason and sentenced to death. On the following day he paid the penalty of plotting and taking arms against the government and against public peace and order under the authority which the people had confided in us.

Riel further declared to the Commissioner: —

"I sat down with Scott as we are doing so now, and asked him truthfully to tell me — as I would not use his statement against him — what he and the Portage people intended to have done with me had they succeeded in capturing me when they surrounded Conture's house," to which he replied, "We intended to keep you as a hostage for the safety of the prisoners."

Mr. Smith continues: —

I argued with Riel and endeavoured to show that some of the circumstances he had mentioned, and especially the last, were very strong reasons to urge why Scott's life should not be sacrificed, and that if, as he represented, Scott was a rash, thoughtless man, whom none cared to have anything to do with, no evil need be apprehended from his example. I pointed out that the one great merit claimed for the insurrection was that so far it had been bloodless, except in one sad instance, which all were willing to look upon as an accident, and implored him not now to stain it, to burden it with what would be considered as a horrible crime (and which might make accommodation with Canada impossible). He exclaimed, "We must make Canada respect us!" I replied, "She has every proper respect for the people of Red River, and this is shown in her having sent Commissioners to treat with them." I told him I had seen the prisoners some time back, when they commissioned me to say to their friends at the Portage that they desired peace, and I offered to go again and reason with them should that be necessary. On this he said, "Look here, Mr. Smith, Mr. Scott, the representative, went to see the prisoners at

my desire, and asking them whom they would vote for as Councillors, if they were permitted a choice outside of their own body, Thomas Scott came forward and said, 'My boys, we will have nothing to do with those Americans.'" And when I remarked, "This is really a most trifling affair, and ought not to have been repeated," he said, "Do not attempt to prejudice us against the Americans, for although we have not been with them, they are with us, and have been better friends to us than the Canadians."

Further argument, entreaty, and protest alike failed to divert Riel from his purpose. He put an end to the interview by saying, "I have done three good things since I have commenced: I have spared Boulton's life at your instance, and I do not regret it, for he is a fine fellow; I pardoned Gaddy, and he showed his gratitude by escaping out of the bastion, but I don't grudge him his miserable life; and now I shall shoot Scott." At this point Lépine, the Adjutant-General, — who was president of the council of seven which tried Scott, five of whom, according to Riel, "with tears streaming from their eyes, condemned him as worthy of death," a sentence which he had confirmed, — now entered, and in answer to Riel said, "He must die." Riel then requested the Reverend Père Lestanc to order the people on their knees for prayer, as it might benefit the condemned man's soul. Referring to Père Lestanc, and making a final appeal, I retired.

On entering the Governor's House within a few minutes of one o'clock, the Reverend Mr. Young joined me, and said, "It is now considerably past the hour; I trust you have succeeded." "No," I said, "for God's sake, go back at once to the poor man, for I fear the worst." The worthy clergyman left immediately, and a few

minutes afterwards he entered the room in which the prisoner was confined, some guards marched in and told Scott his hour was come. Not until then did the reality of his position flash upon the condemned man. He said good-bye to the other prisoners, was led outside the gate of the fort with a white handkerchief covering his head; his coffin, having a piece of white cotton thrown over it, followed. His eyes were then bandaged; he continued in prayer, in which he had been engaged on the way for a few minutes. He asked Mr. Young how he should place himself, whether standing or kneeling; then knelt in the snow, said farewell, and immediately fell back, pierced by three bullets, which had passed through his body. The firing party consisted of six men, all of whom, it is said, were more or less intoxicated. It has been further stated that only three of the muskets were loaded with ball cartridge, and that one man did not discharge his piece. Mr. Young turned aside when the first shots were fired, then went back to the body, and again retired for a moment, while a man discharged his revolver at the sufferer, the ball, it is said, entering the eye and passing round the head.

The wounded man groaned between the time of receiving the musket shots and the discharge of the revolver. Mr. Young asked to have the remains for interment in the burying-ground of the Presbyterian Church, but this was not acceded to, and a similar request, preferred by the Bishop of Rupert's Land, was also refused. He was buried within the walls of the fort. On descending the steps leading from the prison poor Scott, addressing Mr. Young, said, "This is a cold-blooded murder"; then engaged in prayer, and was so occupied until he was shot.

1. Firing Party 2. O'Lone 3. Kennedy 4. O'Donohue 5. Riel 6. Rev. G. Young 7. Alfred Scott

THE DEATH OF THOMAS SCOTT BEFORE THE WALLS OF FORT GARRY, MARCH 4, 1870

From a sketch by an eye-witness

The clergyman afterwards testified that: —

Major Robinson told him he could not credit that the deed of blood had been actually perpetrated, and expressed his incredulity. Seeing this, President Riel asked him to come with him, and led the way into the court and to one of the sheds which lined the interior of the walls, where there was a sentry. Riel and his companions approached, and the former threw open the door, exposing the fatal box, from which the blood dripped into the snow. Hardly had he realized this grim fact, when Major Robinson was horrified to hear a voice, proceeding from the box, or coffin, in anguished but distinct tones exclaim, "Oh, let me out of this. My God, how I suffer!" With blood curdling in his veins, he retreated from the spot. Riel called the sentry, and the two entered the shed and closed the door. A moment later there was the sound of a shot within, and the murdered man was probably released from his torture. Riel returned with the major to the fort, where he dismissed him with a significant warning to secrecy. To comprehend the full horror of this tragedy, it must be remembered that this last incident of Scott's life occurred five hours after he had been shot and coffined, and with the thermometer many degrees below zero.[1]

Commissioner Smith's narrative concludes: —

After this date, I held no communication whatsoever with Riel, except in reference to getting away from the country, which I was not allowed to leave without a pass. I felt that under the circumstances it was not desirable I should remain longer at Red River; but it

[1] Young, *Manitoba Memories.*

was not until late on the night of the 18th inst. Riel gave permission for my departure.

In his own words, although "not accomplishing all that could be desired," Commissioner Smith's visit to Fort Garry was productive of far more good than was realized at the time. He had created a Canadian party amongst the half-breeds, who would have made their influence felt but for Major Boulton's unhappy and inopportune rising in February. Coming at a critical moment, this turned the scale; the shooting of Scott was a tragic sequence. Of the Boulton rising Mr. Smith magnanimously wrote that, "though rash and productive of results the most unfortunate, I can hardly blame, knowing, as already stated, that those who took part in it were actuated and impelled by generous motives." Yet to Sir Stafford Northcote he avowed, as a quarter of a century later in South Africa, Cecil Rhodes similarly avowed of a trusted partisan: "Boulton's act upset all my hopes."

Two years passed. The Government, able to consider Mr. Smith's services coolly and impartially, were moved, though tardily, to send him the following letter: —

Hon. J. Howe to Hon. D. A. Smith, M.P.

Office of the Secretary of State for the Provinces.

Ottawa, 22d February, 1872.

Sir: —

The conditions which led to your appointment in December, 1869, as Special Commissioner to the North-West are now matters of history; but the Governor-

General feels that the important services which, in that capacity, you rendered the country, have not yet received that official recognition to which they are justly entitled.

His Excellency therefore has commanded me to convey to you the expression of the appreciation of the patriotism with which you placed your services at the disposal of the Government and, at an inclement season of the year, cheerfully undertook the long and fatiguing journey to Fort Garry, to aid by your presence and influence in the repression of the unlooked-for disturbances that had unhappily arisen out of the North-West.[1]

. . . . . .

Subsequent events have, in His Excellency's opinion, fully justified the wisdom of his selection of a Commissioner, for if the serious dangers which then threatened the Settlement were happily averted and law and order peacefully established at Fort Garry, His Excellency feels that the result was in no small degree due to the ability and discretion and firmness with which you executed your commission, and to the influence which your character and standing enabled you to command from all classes in the country.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

J. Howe.

Hon. Donald A. Smith, M.P.

[1] The passage here omitted is reproduced on p. 273.

CHAPTER XI

THE DOWNFALL OF RIEL

1870

THE Colonial Under-Secretary, Sir Frederic Rogers, had in January written to Sir Stafford Northcote, Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, advising him that the Canadian Government was hoping for the best results in the sending of Mr. Donald A. Smith as a Special Commissioner. He said: —

From his position as an officer of the Company, the Canadian Ministry anticipated that he would obtain ready access to Fort Garry, and that he would be able to strengthen the hands of Governor Mactavish, and arrange with the loyal and well-affected portion of the people for a restoration of order. They express their confident hope that these measures will succeed; but, in the event of failure, the Canadian Government are making preparations for sending a military force in the early spring.[1]

Lord Granville desires me to add that the reasons given by the Canadian Government for delaying the transfer, weighty in themselves, become practically conclusive when it is considered that Her Majesty's

[1] In his confidential correspondence with Sir John Rose, the Canadian Premier expresses himself less confidently. "By the middle of January we may expect to hear from Donald Smith, the Hudson's Bay man, and from Mr. Thibault; but as I fear they will be unsuccessful, we must at once address ourselves to preparations for the spring." Pope, *Memoirs of Sir John A. Macdonald.*

Government and the Hudson's Bay Company must alike look to that Government for the practical accomplishment of the transfer, and that they appear, in fact, to be conducting it in the spirit which Her Majesty's Government approve, and which is most calculated to avoid that injury to the trade of the Company which Mr. Mactavish anticipated from any violent measures.

His Lordship believes that a short delay in the completion of the contract, however in itself inconvenient may be more than compensated by insuring that the surrender is finally effected with the full consent and agreement of both parties interested.[1]

While still at Fort Garry, Mr. Smith had learned that Sir Stafford Northcote contemplated a visit to Canada, in company with Bishop Taché. Northcote had written to his friend Lord Granville, "What should you say to my going as Joint Commissioner with Bishop Taché to the Red River?" Granville replied that "He could not say how public-spirited he thought Sir Stafford's conduct in deciding to go out and scatter oil on the troubled waters."

"The Company," writes Northcote's biographer, "was nervous about its £300,000, which ought to have been paid by December 1st, but had not been paid. His reasons for going out were to see the Canadian Government and to take care of the Company's interests during the transfer." [2]

Sir Stafford Northcote duly embarked in the spring, and reaching New York travelled westward until he met Mr. Smith returning from his mission

[1] Sir Frederic Rogers to Sir Stafford Northcote, 8th January, 1870.
[2] Andrew Lang, *Life of Stafford Northcote, Earl of Iddesleigh.*

to Red River. Northcote decided that the Company's interests were already in safe hands and that any further efforts in pouring oil on the troubled waters might result in "setting the stream on fire." It was a wise decision.

On his return journey from Fort Garry, which he quitted on March 19, Mr. Smith first encountered a personage with whom he was afterwards to be closely and powerfully associated. This was Mr. James Jerome Hill, travelling by dog-sledge to Winnipeg from St. Paul. Canadian-born and in his thirty-second year, Hill was at this period engaged in the transportation business between these two centres.

On reaching Fort Garry, Hill had an interview with Riel, Bishop Taché, Governor Mactavish, and others. It is interesting to learn from one of his letters that they told him that if strange Indians came into the country with any Canadian military force, all the Indians of the North-West would unite in a fierce resistance; and the friends of Canada were especially apprehensive of the dire effects of such a policy.

On the 30th of March, Mr. Smith reached St. Paul, whence he immediately despatched telegrams to Ottawa and London.

Donald A. Smith to Sir Curtis Lampson

St. Paul, 30th March, 1870.

Left Fort Garry, nineteenth, less unsatisfactory. Ottawa direct. Delegates follow.

Drafts his Report

At St. Paul he learned that the greatest public interest attached to his mission, although its character and history were not yet precisely understood.

He reached Ottawa on the 3d, and, after seeing Sir John Macdonald and Mr. Howe, continued his journey to Montreal, afterwards returning to the capital to finish his Official *Report*. He was scarcely back in the St. Peter's Street offices of the Company before he realized not only that the London Board now looked to him to oversee and advise upon the whole of the Company's North American affairs, but that the Canadian Government and its agents and emissaries, as well as numerous private and commercial interests, looked to him for advice, and frequently for practical assistance. Mr. Mactavish's health was such as to incapacitate him for further business, and Sir Stafford Northcote intimated that the Board regarded Mr. Smith as Mactavish's successor. It had been decided to transact the usual business of the fur-trade that summer at Fort Alexander in lieu of Fort Garry, and thither Mr. Smith would repair. In the mean time, preparations for sending a military force to depose Riel and his Provisional Government were being pushed steadily forward. At the same time innumerable matters connected with the Company's affairs claimed his attention, for during his absence there had been much vexatious mismanagement of his plans for trade throughout the Montreal department.

By the 13th, the *Report* was drafted and forwarded to the Secretary of State: —

Hon. J. Howe to D. A. Smith

PRIVY COUNCIL, April 14th.

DEAR MR. SMITH: —

I have just finished reading your *Report*, which will be placed before the Council to-morrow. Permit me, in this hasty acknowledgment, to say that, although lengthy, it is of absorbing interest and will convey to my colleagues and to the people at large the most intimate acquaintance with the truly painful situation at Red River and the character of persons and recent events there that has yet appeared.

Believe me to be,
Very truly yours,
J. HOWE.

On the following day, Howe again wrote: —

HOUSE OF COMMONS,
Friday night.

DEAR MR. SMITH: —

On reading your *Report*, I strongly advise you to omit the passages reflecting upon Messrs. Thibault and Salaberry, especially the ones I have marked. They are both feeble persons, but I think it is of no use casting any particular discredit upon them, or even to call attention to their feebleness.

Yours faithfully,
J. HOWE.

The general narrative contained in the *Report* I have already given. The passages to which the Secretary took exception are here printed in italics.[1]

[1] On the 17th of May, Archbishop Taché wrote to Sir George Cartier taking exception to some statements made by Mr. Smith in his Report; but Mr. Smith maintained their absolute correctness. Riel afterwards expressed himself as "satisfied" with the accuracy of the *Report*.

After detailing all that occurred between December 13 and March 19, Mr. Smith continues: —

Although not accomplishing all that could be desired, the mission to Red River, as I shall endeavour to show in a few words, has been productive of some good; and that it was not entirely successful may be fairly attributed to the circumstances above referred to, in connection with the action taken and meetings held in January last. *Messrs. Thibault and De Salaberry will no doubt be able fully to explain their conduct in this matter and one reason for it may perhaps be found in the fact (for it was a fact the latter gentleman himself informed me subsequently) that they were then under close restraint and consequently in a great measure precluded from acting as they otherwise would have done. This I can readily believe, as our position at Fort Garry, and not only mine, but that of several others who acted in concert with me, was one of extreme peril, which I hope, however, we were able to disregard in our efforts to accomplish the end we so earnestly desired to attain.*

He goes on to say: —

Success, although in a lesser degree, might also have been gained at a later period but for the rising in February, which, though rash and productive of results the most unfortunate, I can hardly blame, knowing, as already stated, that those who took part in it were actuated and impelled by generous motives. On reaching Red River in December last, I found the English-speaking portion of the inhabitants greatly divided in opinion as to the comparative advantages of union with Canada and the formation of a Crown Colony, while a few, a very small number, favoured annexation to the United States. The explanations offered on the

part of Canada they received as satisfactory, and with hardly a dissentient voice they would now vote for the immediate transfer to the Dominion. They earnestly requested me to assure His Excellency the Governor-General of their warm loyalty to the British Crown.

The case is difficult as regards the French half-breeds. A not inconsiderable number of them remained true to their allegiance during all the troubles through which they have had to pass, and with these will now be found associated many others whose minds had for a time been poisoned by gross misrepresentations made by designing men for their own selfish ends. A knowledge of the true state of the case and of the advantages they would derive from union with Canada had been carefully kept from them, and they were told to judge of Canadians generally by the acts and bearing of some of the less reflective immigrants who had denounced them as "cumberers of the ground," who must speedily make way for the "superior race" about to pour in upon them.

It is also true that in the unauthorized proceedings of some of the recent Canadian arrivals some plausible ground had been given for the feeling of jealousy and alarm with which the contemplated change of government was regarded by the native population. In various localities these adventurers had been industriously marking off for themselves considerable and in some ways very extensive and exceptionally valuable tracts of land, thereby impressing the minds of the people with the belief that the time had come when in their own country they were to be entirely supplanted by the stranger, *and that a spirit of avarice and selfishness was to rule the new order of things*, a belief, however, which I have no doubt might have been completely

precluded by the prevention of all such operations until Canada had unfolded her policy and shown the groundlessness of these fears.

Let us further bear in mind that many of the Catholic clergymen in the country are not French Canadians, but Frenchmen, and consequently, it may be presumed, not very conversant with British laws and institutions and with the liberty and privileges enjoyed under them. Warmly attached to their flocks, they deemed it necessary to exact some guarantee that in their new political condition they would not be treated with injustice. It is unnecessary here to point out how the breach widened, until at length it attained a magnitude and significance little dreamt of in the commencement, even by those who joined most heartily in the movement. It is far more pleasing to be able to state, which I do with much confidence, that a large majority of the French party have no misgivings as to union with Canada, and that joined by and under the guidance of his lordship Bishop Taché, and other members of the clergy who enjoy their confidence, they will shortly prove themselves to be staunch supporters of the Dominion, firm in their allegiance to England.

In the course of the insurrection one deplorable crime and many grossly illegal acts have unquestionably been committed; but it would be alike unpolitic and unjust to charge them to the French population generally, *and while Britain will not fail to punish those who have wilfully sacrificed life, I feel assured the people of Canada will not be less ready to act in a liberal and forgiving spirit even toward such as have erred deeply, but not intentionally.*

Much obloquy has been heaped on the Hudson's Bay Company and their Governor and officers in the

North-West, which I consider it unnecessary at this moment even to attempt to answer or refute, although not doubting that both could be readily and satisfactorily done. Errors, many and grave, have, it cannot be denied, been committed on all sides, but wilful and intentional neglect of duty cannot, I feel convinced, be laid to the charge either of the Hudson's Bay Company or their representatives in the country. Personally I have been entirely unconnected with the administration of affairs in that department.

I would respectfully submit that it is of the utmost importance there should be a strong military force in the North-West as early as practicable.[1] The minds of the Indians, especially the tribes of the Saskatchewan country, have been so perplexed and confused by the occurrences of the past six months that it would be very unsafe to trust to their forbearance; and, indeed, until the question of Indian claims has been finally settled, it would not, in my opinion, be prudent to leave the country unprotected by military. The adjustment of those claims will require early attention, and some memoranda and evidence in my hands on the subject I shall, if desired, be prepared to lay before the Government.

There could be but one opinion as to the ability displayed in the foregoing *Report.* It was reprinted in England and copies of it were read eagerly by the leading British statesmen of the day, including both Mr. Disraeli and Mr. Gladstone, the former of whom told Sir Stafford Northcote that he found it "quite thrilling." As to the mis-

[1] From this recommendation sprang later that sterling body of men, the North-West Mounted Police.

sion, even at Fort Garry, as the difficulties became known, tributes began speedily to appear from those best qualified to judge. Amongst these was the Reverend Mr. Young, the single-minded and upright clergyman who had administered the last rites to Thomas Scott. Mr. Young expressed his gratitude for Mr. Smith's "earnest efforts in behalf of the liberty and lives of the imperilled loyalists." He wrote long afterwards: —

I am aware that there were those, both within and without the prisons, who, worn out with weary waiting for their own release, or the release of their friends, through his influence, became impatient and complaining on account of what they regarded, through not knowing the circumstances, as sheer tardiness, indicative of a censurable want of either sympathy or courage. Such, however, were not my views. Had I been circumstanced as they were, possibly I should have felt as they did, but knowing what I knew from personal observation, and contact with all parties, I felt then, as I feel now, that it was far wiser, safer and liklier to lead to success that we should "make haste slowly." The task he undertook was no easy one, he saw clearly on his arrival at Fort Garry, but he so prosecuted it as to accomplish vastly more in the way of weakening Riel's influence, and preparing the way for his final overthrow, than has been generally understood. Very true, he was unsuccessful in his efforts to secure the release of the prisoners, and to save the life of poor Thomas Scott, but he was successful in the case of Major Boulton, and in his efforts to gain such knowledge of the views and feelings and wishes of the different classes for incorporation in his *Report* to the

Government as were most valuable, and also in his subsequent efforts to aid in restoration of order, and in the adjusting of manifold and conflicting interests; so that in these and many other ways, as I view it, Sir Donald Smith has placed the Dominion under obligation for services rendered in the North-West.[1]

Throughout Canada, and especially Ontario, the instant the tidings spread, Scott's murder occasioned the utmost excitement. Nothing that could be done to inflame the people was neglected. Public meetings were held in several cities, at which protests were made against granting any rights or privileges to the half-breeds. In the midst of this popular frenzy, two of the delegates, Père Ritchot and Alfred H. Scott, who had been appointed by the Red River Convention, arrived in Ottawa.

To the Honourable Secretary of State, etc., Joseph Howe

OTTAWA, 22d April, 1870.

SIR: — The undersigned delegates from the North-West, desiring to delay as little as possible the business of their mission, have the honour to request you to inform the Government of His Excellency that they desire to be heard as soon as possible.

ALFRED H. SCOTT.
JOHN BLACK.
J. N. RITCHOT.

An awkward situation occurred. The delegates, on the affidavit of Hugh Scott, a brother of Riel's

[1] Young, *Manitoba Memories.*

victim, were promptly arrested. They were taken before a police magistrate and proceedings begun. But neither the British nor the Canadian Government intended that another blunder should be committed. The proceedings were quashed and the delegates released.

On the 26th, the Honourable Joseph Howe, Secretary of State, thus replied to their request for an audience: —

The Honourable J. Howe to the Delegates

OTTAWA, April 26th, 1870.

GENTLEMEN: —

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 22d instant, announcing that, as delegates of the North-West to the Government of the Dominion of Canada, you desired as soon as possible to have an audience with the Government; and in reply I have informed you that the Honourable Sir John Macdonald and the Honourable Sir George Cartier have been authorized by the Government to treat with you on the subject of your mission, and they will be ready to receive you at 11 o'clock.

I have the honour to be, gentlemen,
Your very obedient servant,
JOSEPH HOWE.

TO REV. J. N. RITCHOT,
JOHN BLACK,
H. M. SCOTT, } ESQUIRES.

The first condition of the treaty proposed by the delegates of the North-West was that, "after the arrangements, a general amnesty should be pro-

claimed of necessity in the North-West before Canada took possession of these territories."

Sir George Cartier's answer was that there was no power in the Government to grant the amnesty; that it was an Imperial matter solely, in consequence of the state of the title to the Territory at that time. He told the delegates that this matter being of course an Imperial matter, he had no doubt that the subject would be taken up in England, and that he was warranted in saying so by the fact of the anxiety which the Imperial Government had shown to bring about a settlement of the difficulties in the North-West Territory.

The assistance of the delegates was now requisitioned by the Ministry, in preparing an Act instituting the new Province of Manitoba. The measure was introduced into the House of Commons on the 2d of May, 1870, by the Prime Minister himself. Sir Stafford Northcote and Donald A. Smith were amongst those present. Two days later the Bill was amended so as to include the considerable English settlement at Portage la Prairie. Besides this enlargement of boundaries, an increase in the grant of land reserved for the Hudson's Bay Company was announced. Several other alterations were made, and after an exciting debate, the Manitoba Act was passed.

On the 6th of May, Mr. Smith wrote to Montreal: —

You will be shocked to learn that Sir John has been stricken down with illness and now lies, it is said,

betwixt life and death. But the Bill is now in Mr. Howe's hands and is perfectly safe.[1]

Before Sir John's illness it became a question of whom to appoint as Lieutenant-Governor of the new Province. Howe suggested Donald Smith's name and the Prime Minister spoke to Sir Stafford Northcote on the subject.[2] Mr. Smith, it may be pointed out, was already destined to succeed Mactavish as the Hudson's Bay Company's Governor *ad interim*. What his views on the present proposal were, thus appear:—

D. A. Smith to Sir Stafford Northcote

MONTREAL, 9th May, 1870.

MY DEAR SIR STAFFORD:—

I feel under great obligation to you for your letter, which I received only an hour ago. Pray believe that I had already realized the honour done me by Sir John's even thinking of my name in connection with so exalted a post; but the sacrifice of my liberty and of all my

[1] The Prime Minister suffered a severe heart attack, which incapacitated him for months.

[2] Sir Joseph Pope (*Memoirs of Sir John A. Macdonald*) says: "The selection of a Lieutenant-Governor was a matter of some concern. One error of judgment had been committed in this regard: another might be fatal. On his return to Ottawa in the preceding January, Mr. McDougall had tendered the resignation of his office which the Prime Minister thought it well to accept. Before all hope of a peaceable solution of the difficulty had died away, Sir John Macdonald had some idea of appointing Governor Mactavish, of the Hudson's Bay Company. A little later, Mr. Donald A. Smith's name occurred to him as a fit man. Subsequently, Colonel Wolseley intimated his willingness to accept the position; but the appointment of a military Governor was not considered expedient. Finally the Premier's choice fell upon Mr. Archibald."

present plans which it would entail, made my rejection of it, had it been formally offered, unavoidable. I could not, as matters stand, have continued my connection with the Company without incurring opposition so violent as to undo any good my mission may have done. Mr. ——— stands on an altogether different footing in the country.

I fear I cannot acquiesce in all your flattering expressions concerning myself and my usefulness to the Company here, and I am glad that this matter is now not likely to go any further.

Believe me,
My dear Sir Stafford,
Very sincerely yours,
DON. A. SMITH.

At Ottawa during this time, Sir Stafford Northcote, Mr. Howe, Sir George Cartier, and Mr. Smith were frequently in council. Sir Stafford was loud in his condemnation of the "shabby behaviour" of the Imperial Government. He thought the English Government should have settled all questions before the transfer to Canada.

Sir George Cartier came in while we were talking, and I repeated to him the substance of what had passed. He assured me that the Government, in declining to accept the transfer of the country in December, had not been influenced by any pecuniary considerations, but by others of a political character; and that amongst other things they had feared that if Canada accepted the transfer the status of the insurgents might be held to be altered, and that the United States might claim a right to recognize them as belligerents; whereas, so long as the country remained under the

government of the Hudson's Bay Company, to which no objection was taken, the affair would only be regarded as a riot. I said I had no desire to question the conduct of Canada in declining to accept the transfer, or to enquire into the motives of the Government. What the Company was concerned with was the refusal of Her Majesty's Government to accept the surrender, and that I held that we had a good claim in respect of that refusal — it being for Her Majesty's Government to settle afterward with the Government of Canada how that claim was to be met. Both the Ministers concurred that we had a good claim, and that Canada was, to some extent at all events, responsible. They said the Home Government had behaved very shabbily in the matter — a sentiment which I was not disposed to dissent from.[1]

For weeks the Government had been quietly proceeding with arrangements for sending in a military force to restore peace and order in the North-West, should other means fail. Earl Granville had, on the 5th of March, telegraphed to Sir John Young, the Governor-General of Canada: —

Her Majesty's Government will give proposed military assistance, provided reasonable terms are granted Red River settlers, and provided your Government enable Her Majesty's Government to proclaim the transfer of the territory simultaneously with the movement of the force.

This was agreed to, and Lieutenant-General Sir James Lindsay was placed in command of the

[1] Lang, *Earl of Iddesleigh.*

forces. In the instructions to Sir Clinton Murdock, Earl Granville said, "Troops should not be employed in forcing the sovereignty of Canada on the population, should they refuse to admit it." This was strictly adhered to, as the sequel will show. General Lindsay was instructed to consult with Sir John Young with regard to the selection of the force itself, and of the officer to command it. At first it was proposed to send about two hundred and fifty regulars and seven hundred volunteers, but the number of the former was afterwards increased to nearly four hundred in order to allow of small garrisons being left at Thunder Bay and Fort Francis to guard the supplies, the Dominion Government agreeing to pay the expenses of all over two hundred and fifty.

On the 23d of April, Earl Granville sent the following despatch to Sir John Young: —

On the following conditions, troops may advance: —

1. Rose to be authorized to pay the £300,000 at once, and Her Majesty's Government to be at liberty to make transfer before the end of June.

2. Her Majesty's Government to pay expenses of British troops only, not exceeding 250, and Canadian Government the rest, sending at least 500 trained men.

3. Canadian Government to accept decision of Her Majesty's Government on disputed points of the Settlers' Bill of Rights.

4. Military arrangements to be to the satisfaction of General Lindsay.

Two days, therefore, before the second reading of the Manitoba Bill, instructions were sent to Sir

John Rose to pay over the £300,000 to the Hudson's Bay Company, and this was done on the 11th, just one day before the Manitoba Act received the assent of the Governor-General. On the 6th, however, orders were sent to Sir John Young by Earl Granville that the troops might proceed.

In April, Lieutenant-Colonel Garnet Wolseley, then holding the post of Deputy Quarter-master-General in British North America, had been appointed to the command of the expedition. On the 4th of May, he left Montreal for Collingwood, to inspect the preparations for the embarkation of the force at that point.

Anticipating the sending of troops into the North-West, the Canadian Government had given instructions to make arrangements for their transport from Lake Superior to Red River, and at Mr. Smith's suggestion an agent was also sent to maintain friendly relations with the Indians along the route. Work on the "Dawson route," as it was called, was also pushed forward as rapidly as possible, and everything was done to facilitate the passage of the troops.

Provisions, wagons, horses, oxen, and provender were in readiness, and on the 3d of May, a steamer left Collingwood for Fort William, loaded with supplies of all kinds, and carrying a large number of *voyageurs* and workmen. This vessel was followed in a few days by one called the *Chicora*, with further stores and men. When, however, this steamer arrived at Sault Ste. Marie, the American officials there flatly refused passage through the canal. The

stores had, therefore, to be unloaded and portaged across to the previous steamer, which had been allowed to pass through into Lake Superior. The *Chicora* then returned to Collingwood, and brought the first detachment of troops to the Sault, where the passage of the canal was again refused. On this, representations were instantly made to the American authorities at Washington by Sir John Young, through Sir Edward Thornton, the British Minister, that the expedition being one of peace, the stores should not be stopped.

Forgotten now is this affair of the *Chicora*, but at the time it was serious enough. Although America was permitted during the Civil War to pass armed revenue cutters through the Canadian canals, and likewise to pass American soldiers in uniform and with arms over the Canadian railways, the Canadian Government had nevertheless determined to take the greatest care to avoid any extraordinary demand on the courtesy of the United States Government. Their instructions were precise, that neither troops, boats, nor warlike material of any kind should be sent through the Sault Ste. Marie Canal. For Canadian vessels to be permitted again to pass through the canal was a courtesy of the most ordinary kind which had been for many years, in times of war as well as of peace, extended to American vessels passing through Canadian canals. This courtesy had thus been refused without enquiry or knowledge of the intentions of the Canadian Government. In no sense could the existing state of things at Red River be regarded as justi-

fying the unusual step thus taken by the American authorities.

Small wonder, then, that Sir John Macdonald regarded the conduct of the Americans of an unfriendly character, and requested Sir John Young to communicate with the Secretary of State for the Colonies, in order that the subject of the stoppage of the *Chicora* might be considered by Her Majesty's Government.

A vigorous remonstrance was instantly addressed by the British Minister in Washington to Mr. Fish, the American Secretary of State.

Donald A. Smith to Sir Stafford Northcote

11th May, 1870.

. . . I understand, that both Mr. Fish and the President explained that the incident could not have happened at a worse time and was altogether most awkward. The anti-British element in the country claimed that our expedition was going out to Red River to crush a people who merely asked for their rights, and punish their leaders, who amongst them were popular heroes. "It is notorious that the *Chicora* is carrying stores for the troops. If this is a peaceful expedition, prove it by pardoning and absolving all the members of the Provisional Government. Then we will release the *Chicora*." All this is very humiliating to us and it is most improbable that Sir John will yield merely in order to save Mr. President Grant from the animosity of the Fenians.

Mr. Smith's suspicions were well founded. Confirmation was shortly forthcoming.

Sir E. Thornton to Sir John Young

WASHINGTON, May 17th, 1870.

SIR: —

I have the honour to inform Your Excellency that during the discussion with Mr. Fish on the passage of Canadian vessels through the Sault Ste. Marie Canal, both he, and subsequently the President, expressed their conviction of the expediency of a proclamation of amnesty being issued in favour of Riel and his followers for past proceedings, and although they did not wish it to be made public that they had suggested such a measure, they thought that the United States Government would derive much help from it in inducing the people of the United States to acquiesce in Canadian vessels being allowed to pass through the canal.

Believing that advice to Her Majesty upon the subject would come within the province of Her Majesty's Government, I have referred the suggestion to the Earl of Clarendon.

I have, etc.,
EDWD. THORNTON.

After several days of argument, President Grant thought it prudent to accept the assurances of the Canadian Government.

J. C. Bancroft Davis to E. Thornton

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
WASHINGTON, 17th May, 1870.

SIR: —

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your note of the 11th instant, informing me that you have received a telegram from the Governor-General

of Canada, stating that the Canadian steamer *Chicora*, carrying an ordinary commercial freight and no war stores has been prevented from passing through the Sault Ste. Marie Canal, and further informing me that any difficulty which may have existed with the inhabitants of the Red River Settlement has now been amicably arranged and that the delegates from the Convention, representing the whole population of the Fort Garry district, have acknowledged themselves well dealt with and satisfied, and that the expedition which is now being sent to the Settlement will be a peaceful expedition and with the object of maintaining good order in that district, and of insuring the regular and harmonious establishment of the new Government, and further, on behalf of the Governor-General of Canada, expressing the hope that the Government of the United States will give orders that the abovementioned canal shall remain on the same footing as regards Canadian vessels as the Welland is in regard to the vessels of the United States, there being no intention to send through the canal any munitions of war for the expedition which is about to proceed to the Red River Settlement, and that the *Chicora* and other vessels of that class may be allowed to pass through.

In reply, I have the honour to inform you that under instructions from the President, the Governor of the State of Michigan has been notified by telegraph that, in consequence of your representations, the Government of the United States does not desire to oppose the passage of the *Chicora* and other vessels of that class through the canal in the jurisdiction of the United States, so long as they do not carry troops and munitions of war.

The embargo was thus removed, after much delay had been experienced, and the supplies for the troops were rapidly pushed forward to make up for lost time. But the men composing the force were obliged to march across the portage and reëmbark on the Lake Superior side.

At Fort Alexander, the temporary headquarters of the fur-trade, Mr. Smith impatiently awaited the arrival of Colonel Wolseley and the troops. On the 21st of August, the Sixtieth Rifles, the artillery and engineers had all arrived at the fort. Mr. Smith, as chief executive officer in the country under the old régime, joined the expedition, with the Canadian volunteers, following in the rear. A start was made down the river to Lake Winnipeg, and on the 22d the mouth of the Red River was reached. There was some uncertainty whether Riel would offer resistance to the troops, and Colonel Wolseley had to be ready for any emergency. On leaving the Stone Fort (Lower Fort Garry), therefore, a company was sent by land in advance of the troops, — who remained in the boats, — with orders to stop any persons going in that direction, so that intelligence of the arrival of the troops might be prevented from reaching Riel. About 8 o'clock on the morning of the 23d of August, 1870, Wolseley disembarked at Point Douglas, two miles north of Fort Garry.

At this point the Red River makes a sharp bend to the east, and again curving to the west, forms a projecting neck of land. This spot is famous in Red River history as the scene of the battle where the

voyageurs and French half-breeds of the North-West Fur Company attacked the Hudson's Bay men in 1813, and put to death Governor Semple and about a score of his followers. Where the usually abrupt bank of the Red River was less precipitous, the troops scrambled on shore.

Preceded by skirmishers and followed by a rear guard the little force drew near Fort Garry. There was no sign of occupation, no flag on the flagstaff, no men upon the walls; the muzzles of one or two guns showed through the bastions, but no sign of defence or resistance was visible about the place. The gate facing the north was closed, but the ordinary one, looking south upon the Assiniboine River, was found open. As the skirmish line neared the north side, two mounted men rode round the west face and entered at a gallop through the open gateway.[1]

Riel had fled. At the head of his troops, Colonel Wolseley marched in, the Union Jack was hoisted, a royal salute was fired, and three cheers given for the Queen, in which a number of the residents and local people there assembled joined. Thus was the "errand of peace" accomplished, and the little handful of men, after an arduous journey of six hundred miles, could rest from their labours without firing a shot, or having lost a life.

The flight of Riel and his associates of the so-called "Provisional Government," and the delay in Governor Archibald's arrival, left the Hudson's Bay Company as the only civil authority. Mr. Donald Smith was requested by Colonel Wolseley

[1] Butler, *The Great Lone Land.*

to administer affairs at Red River. For ten days, Mr. Smith was the *de facto* Governor and Administrator of the Province of Manitoba. Brief as the term was it was one of anxiety. Certain volunteers had come expecting to wreak vengeance on the foe; they were angry at being baulked.

That a "wild scene of drunkenness and debauchery" followed the arrival of the troops in Winnipeg, we have the testimony of one of the young officers of the force: —

> The miserable-looking village produced, as if by magic, more saloons than any city of twice its size in the States could boast of. The vilest compounds of intoxicating liquors were sold indiscriminately to every one,[1] and for a time it seemed as though the place had become a very Pandemonium. No civil authority had been given to the commander of the expedition and no civil power of any kind existed in the Settlement. The troops alone were under control, but the populace were free to work what mischief they pleased. Men who had been forced to fly from the Settlement during the reign of the rebel government now returned to their homes, and for some time it seemed probable that the sudden revulsion of feeling, unrestrained by the presence of a civil power, would lead to excesses against the late ruling faction.[2]

That this was an entirely unjust and inaccurate presentment of the case, Lieutenant-General Sir

[1] Governor Smith had previously, at the last meeting of the North-West Council at Fort Alexander, brought forward a measure for the prohibition of intoxicating drink throughout the North-West Territories, which was subsequently confirmed by Canada.

[2] Butler, *The Great Lone Land.* 1873.

William Butler, the writer of the foregoing, afterwards himself acknowledged. There *was* a civil power and it was recognized and respected by the resident civil population generally. The turbulence came from the faction which had travelled in the wake of the troops, or had only awaited their arrival to disclose themselves and make trouble. Acting-Governor Smith not only issued an appeal to the people, but caused a force of special constables to be sworn in.

On the 2d of September, he was relieved by Lieutenant-Governor Archibald, on whose arrival a royal salute was fired. A few days later the new representative of the Crown held a levée at Fort Garry, in the house recently occupied by Governor Mactavish, and afterwards known as Government House.

Poor Mactavish! He had left Fort Garry in May and later crossed the ocean to die. He landed at Liverpool July 15th; but the disease had made too great headway upon his constitution and on the same day he breathed his last.

Much speculation was aroused by Riel's sudden flight. He was confessedly a man of courage: why did he act in this craven manner? In his account, Sir William Butler observes: —

That he meditated opposition cannot be doubted. The muskets cast away by his guard were found loaded; ammunition had been served from the magazine on the morning of the flight. But muskets and ammunition are not worth much without hands and hearts to use them, and twenty hands, with perhaps an aggregate of

two and a half hearts among them, were all he had to depend on at the last moment.

But did Riel meditate opposition? That he did not is shown in the following letter to Mr. Smith:—

Louis Riel to D. A. Smith

DAKOTAH, U.S.,
September 23d, 1870.

SIR, —

We can never forget the gross violation of country and property in which we have been treated. Expecting something far different from an honourable British officer, I, as the chosen head of the Provisional Government, which has administered here on behalf of the Dominion of Canada since last November, expected to receive Colonel Wolseley and Governor Archibald at Fort Garry and formally deliver up the Government. My guards were instructed to fire a salute and the enclosed address was to have been read to the appointed Governor in token of submission to the régime of Canada, with our rights and liberties guaranteed to us. This proceeding was denied to us, and we fortunately had news of the temper of injustice animating the new coming [*sic*] and if we are said to have fled it was to save ourselves and them from bloodshed.

You have already ascertained the truth of this from your people here, namely, that we remained at our posts until the last moment, only from a sense of the duty we owed our people.

Yours respectfully,
LOUIS RIEL.

Even Butler is forced to confess: —

Monseigneur Taché's Advice

Vain, ignorant, and conceited though he [Riel] was, he seemed to have been an implicit believer in his mission; nor can it be doubted that he possessed a fair share of courage too — courage not of the Red River type, which is a very peculiar one, but more in accordance with our European ideas of that virtue.

Mr. Smith afterwards said: —

It was known that before the troops reached Red River there was a great divergence of opinion between Riel and O'Donohue. It was well known that Riel and his friends were anxious at that time to come peaceably into Canada, but O'Donohue took quite a different course. There was evidence to show that O'Donohue endeavoured to keep the people from uniting with Canada, and that he used every effort to have the country annexed to the United States, and it was also well established that Riel had at that time offers from the other side of the line which he would not accede to.[1]

On the 27th of August, Mr. Smith received a letter from Archbishop Taché, in which the following passage occurs: —

To Acting-Governor D. A. Smith

I am told that special constables had been sworn in the name of peace, for the security and welfare of the country. I humbly beg that these constables (as well as the magistrates and justices of the peace) will not be used except to maintain the tranquillity against actual movements or disturbances, and that all and every one will refuse to act in reference to anything previous to the arrival of Her Majesty's troops in Fort

[1] Parliamentary *Debates*, 1874.

Garry. I see a real danger in the gathering by you of a number of the same men you employed last winter; with the best will in the world you cannot have a fair idea of the disposition of the different sections of the population.

The men referred to were those called the "loyal French," and the Archbishop was apprehensive that as those men had assisted Mr. Smith in getting up meetings throughout the country, and in enabling him to make the explanation which he was desired by the Canadian Government to make, there would be danger of a collision. Another letter from the Archbishop, written a few days later, was to the same effect.

The warning had not been needed, for it was not Mr. Smith's intention to incur any risk of the sort. His constant presence and example at this crisis undoubtedly averted danger.[1]

To Sir Stafford Northcote Mr. Smith wrote: —

29th September, 1870.

The greatest danger now lies in the temper of many of the volunteers, who are keen Orangemen, and who enlisted chiefly with a desire to avenge themselves upon the French for the murder of Scott. Being baulked in this by the sudden disbandment, they have remained in the country, and in concert with the Ontario settlers have evinced, upon every occasion, the utmost animosity against the French population generally. This sentiment is returned, and individual collisions are frequent; a spark might kindle the flames anew; but so far we have been spared any scenes of flagrant violence.

[1] Statement by Dr. O'Donnell.

Further Collision averted

But escape from that which the writer feared was narrow.

A body of French half-breeds had made a selection of a tract of land at Rivière aux Islets de Bois; some of them had made farms, or, at all events, enclosures, at that place. There was abundance of land elsewhere equally good, but the newcomers preferred this spot. They entered upon it, staked it off, put up huts, and declared they would hold it against all comers. To give a special character to their proceeding they rejected the name by which the river had been known, and called it the Boyne.

Naturally, the feelings of the half-breeds were outraged; it was bad enough to lose land they believed to be theirs; but in the new name they detected an insult to their religion. Property, race, and creed were all to be flouted. They met in the parishes of Assiniboine and Red River, resolved to drive off the intruders. News of their intentions reached Governor Archibald, who instantly despatched a warning that if they lifted a hand or struck a blow, it was "all over with them."

The threatened collision was thus arrested, but not without great risk.

Had blood been shed on that occasion we should have had a civil war in which every French half-breed would have been an active participator; while from the English half-breed, in accord on the question of property with the French, neutrality was the utmost that could have been counted on, and at this moment we had a garrison of only eighty men to defend all our

military stores at Fort Garry, and to preserve the peace of half a continent besides.

Although the immediate danger was over, the feelings of sullen discontent remained, and on this discontent O'Donohue founded his chances.

The leader of the raid had been a member of the Provisional Government; the other members of that Government were in the Province outlawed for their offences, abused by one press, and thrown over by the other, and yet exercising a large influence among their own race and creed. Under the circumstances, the chances were that the French would join the enemy. I had a tough battle to fight.[1]

Shortly after the arrival of the troops an attempt was made to recover the remains of the unhappy Thomas Scott, which had been buried within the quadrangle of Fort Garry.

The excavation was carried on in the presence of a large crowd under the direction of the Reverend Mr. Young, and with great vigour. As the hole deepened, the excitement became the more intense. When, after digging some six feet, the spade struck on a board, and when the earth was removed and disclosed a deal board shaped like a coffin, every one held his breath. But the excitement was turned into something like disappointed rage when one of the diggers thrust his arm into the box and pronounced it empty. It was empty, excepting only the rope with which Scott's arms had been pinioned. What became of poor Scott's body?

[1] Governor Archibald's *Memorandum.*

Long afterwards a guard stated that, before the box was buried, the body was exhumed, weighted heavily with chains, and plunging through a hole in the ice, vanished forever.

It is now proper to advert to another and more significant matter. It was then alleged that on Colonel Wolseley's arrival, the Hudson's Bay officials immediately seized a number of incriminating documents lately in the possession of the Provisional Government and threw them into an adjacent well. Afterwards these papers were fished up out of the well and hurriedly burnt. Concerning this incident, Mr. Smith long afterwards felt called upon to furnish the following explanation: —

> These papers were in a box belonging to an officer of the Company, Mr. William H. Watt, who was removing from one district of the country to another, and who came in with the troops to Fort Garry. This box was taken hold of in the confusion which then prevailed, his clothes and other things were made away with, and the box was thrown down a well. It was necessary to have the well cleared out to get water for the troops. A fire engine was used for the purpose, and while this was being done that box was fished up and Mr. Watt's papers, being wet and perfectly useless, he determined to have them destroyed.

This explicit statement was sent to the *Liberal* newspaper, but after being set in type was suppressed by the editor, a Mr. Laurie, at the instance of Dr. Schultz. Years afterwards on the floor of Parliament Schultz, then member for Lisgar, denied, not only having suppressed the letter in ques-

tion, but even having had any connection with the *Liberal*. Mr. Smith thereupon communicated with Mr. Laurie and received from him the following: —

Mr. Laurie to Mr. D. A. Smith, M.P.

Your letter of September, 1870, to the editor of the *Liberal*, denying the company's officers finding or destroying Provisional Government's documents, was suppressed by Mr. Schultz, the proprietor, after being set up by me as editor.

H. J. Laurie.[1]

What is the truth of this affair of the destruction of documents alleged to be incriminating? I am convinced that Mr. Smith was perfectly ingenuous in his statement, and that he was unaware of the character of any of the letters which had been brought by Chief Trader Watt from Pembina, and which it was thought prudent to destroy. In 1906, I had some reason to believe that amongst these letters were many from officers of the Hudson's Bay Company expressing themselves with too great freedom upon the events then impending or occurring. But several were from Governor Mactavish, and Dr. Cowan and J. H. McTavish during the period when Governor McDougall was on the frontier. After a lapse of nearly half a century, it cannot affect Mactavish's memory to publish to the world a fragment of one of these communications which was *not* destroyed. The fragment reads: —

[1] *Parliamentary Debates*, April 2, 1875.

A Significant Fragment

. . . a most difficult one and the circumstances are such that the late Governor could not possibly presume to give orders to Commissioned Gentlemen, who must during the present anarchy conduct the business according to their own judgment.

Privately, as one man to another, it is a question whether McDougall *should not be starved out* for his arrogance. Only I strongly advise you to risk nothing for the greedy London Directory, from whom we are not likely to receive any thanks, but who will themselves receive full compensation for stores, etc. — As for Riel he is every day strengthening himself and all our work-people are with him.

It is quite useless to send me any further accounts, as Mr. R. has possession of all our books here and it only adds to present confusion and future labor, inventories of losses, etc. The question of supplies to La Rose rests entirely with your own discretion.

W. MACTAVISH.[1]

At the most it merely exhibits afresh what all the world now knows, that the wintering partners were indignant at the way they had been treated, and also that the Governor of Assiniboia was human enough to resent the tone of Mr. McDougall's official *communiqués* to him.

[1] This interesting fragment is of azure foolscap slightly burnt at the edges and is now in the possession of a gentleman in Montreal.

CHAPTER XII

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

1870–1871

MANITOBA had thus become one of the great Provinces of the Canadian Dominion. Near the middle of one of the western lakes discovered by the old Canadian explorers is a small island shunned by the red men as haunted ground. "Never," wrote one of the Company's officers, "will they approach it, much less land on it, for it is the place of Manitou-bah — 'the speaking of God' — whose voice they hear nightly as they camp by the lake or guide their fishing boats over its surface." But if the superstitious Ojibway listened and avoided, piously pronouncing the name of Manitou, the inquisitive white man heard and set out to probe the mystery. It was revealed as a simple natural phenomenon — the beating of the waves on a peculiar natural shingle. Along the northern shore of the island runs a low cliff of compact fine-grained limestone, which, when the wind blows and the waters beat, clinks like steel under the stroke of the hammer. At a distance it is like the ringing of distant church bells, so that the explorer Dawson, who spent several days and nights on the island, often awoke fancying he heard chimes. The breeze subsides, the waves play gently on the shore, and then low wailing sounds — spirit voices to the awe-

stricken Ojibways — come up from the beach. This haunt of Manitou became known to the whites as Manitoba Island; the island gave its name first to the lake and then to the nearest trading-post of the Hudson's Bay Company. In 1870 the Canadian Parliament adopted it as the appellation of the combined British settlements, south and east of the lake.

One of the first acts of Governor Archibald was to order a census of the population of the Province, preliminary to an election of members to the Manitoba Legislature. The leading citizens of Winnipeg waited on the Honourable [1] Donald A. Smith with a request that he would represent them in the Assembly. Writs having duly been issued, he was elected on the 30th of December. But the citizens did not stop there. Mr. Smith was asked to be the Conservative candidate in Selkirk for the Dominion House of Commons, and on the 2d of March, 1871, he was triumphantly elected. A fortnight later (the 15th), the assembled wisdom of the new Province met in parliament for the first time.

The building which was fitted up for the use of the Provincial Legislature was the private dwelling-house of a merchant, Mr. Bannatyne, who surrendered it to the Government, no other place being available. In this plain unpretentious building, two storeys in height with attics, the history of the latest offshoot of the great Mother of Parliaments

[1] He had been appointed a member of the Executive or Legislative Council for Rupert's Land and the North-West Territory on October 21.

began. The ground floor was occupied by the two chambers, the attics were used as committee rooms, while the second story, we are told, was retained by Mr. Bannatyne for himself and family. The rooms were all handsomely carpeted, the throne and chair being tastefully festooned with scarlet drapery and the doors leading out of the different chambers neatly covered with red cloth. A flag-pole having been erected on the roof of the building, the Union Jack was displayed for the first time on the day of the opening of Parliament.

Towards this humble Parliament House a guard of honour, consisting of one hundred men of the Ontario Battalion, accompanied by the Regimental Band under the command of Major Wainwright, marched from Fort Garry and formed in line in the main street of Winnipeg. A few moments after the troops arrived, a salute of fifteen guns announced that His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor had left the Government House, and at three o'clock, the Governor, dressed in the Windsor uniform, alighted from his sleigh accompanied by his private secretary and aide-de-camp, the troops presenting arms and the band playing the National Anthem. "All proceeded as formally and decorously," wrote Mr. Donald Smith, M.P., to Sir Stafford Northcote, "as if the eyes of Westminster were upon us."

Immediately on taking his seat on the throne, His Excellency directed the Usher of the Black Rod to summon the members who, on appearing in the Chamber of the Legislative Council, were requested by His Excellency to choose their Speaker. Having

retired for this purpose, they returned in a short time, having elected Mr. Royal who was presented to the Governor by the Honourable Messrs. Girard and Clarke. The Governor then delivered his speech, congratulating the members of both Houses on the liberal representative institutions which had been bestowed upon so small a community by the liberality of the Dominion Parliament and that it was their duty to show that such confidence had not been misplaced. He then referred to the isolated position of the Province, but stated that this would shortly be changed by the building of railroad and steam communications and the construction of a telegraph line.

Amongst those present, besides the members of both houses and a number of ladies at the delivery of the Governor's speech, were several officers of the Dominion forces headed by Lieutenant-Colonel Jarvis, C.M.G., commandant. The Hudson's Bay Company's officers present, besides Messrs. Smith and J. H. McTavish, who were members of the House, were Messrs. Cyril Grahame and Robert Hamilton, of Norway House. The local clergy present were: Church of England — the Lord Bishop of Rupert's Land, the Archdeacon of Assiniboine, the Reverend Mr. Gardner, and the Reverend Henry Cochrane. Roman Catholic — Bishop Taché, Vicar-General Thibault, and the Reverend Mr. Dugast; while the Presbyterian and Methodist denominations were represented respectively by the Reverend Messrs. Black and Fletcher and the Reverend George Young.

We read in the letter of an eye-witness that "after the delivery of the Speech from the Throne, the members of the Lower House, accompanied by most of the visitors, adjourned to the other chamber, His Excellency taking leave at the same time." The first business of the session was to grant leave of absence to Messrs. Smith and Delorme, in order that they might proceed to Ottawa and take their seats in the Dominion House of Commons. At Ottawa, Mr. Donald Smith was the first of the Manitoba members to appear on the scene, arriving on March 30th. He was greeted cordially by Sir George Cartier, then acting as leader of the House, in Sir John Macdonald's absence in Washington, and was formally introduced by him and Mr. Simpson of Algoma. There was some slight informality in this proceeding, as the returns had not been received, but although calling attention to this, the leader of the Opposition, the Honourable Alexander Mackenzie, did not press the point.

An amusing incident occurred after Mr. Smith had shaken hands with the Speaker. The Opposition members jestingly called on him to take a seat on their side. Not yet familiar with the seating arrangements of the House, he was about to comply, when he was rescued amid applause and laughter by Sir George Cartier and conducted to a desk on the Government side. Events less than three years later were to make a change necessary.

The presence of the new member evoked lively interest amongst his colleagues and the public. He was not to make his first speech in the House of

Commons. A banquet was given a night or two later at the Russell House, to Mr. (afterwards Sir) Joseph Trutch who was an advocate of the Pacific Railway project. Mr. Smith was but one amongst many and had not intended to speak; but after repeated calls, he rose.

As it had been [said he] determined that they were to have a railway connection with this country, he would say something about the route. It was alleged that the route from Fort Garry to Canada was almost impracticable. He believed from what he could learn from the people who had traversed it that this was not the case. By following the old route taken by the Hudson's Bay Company's officers, going behind Nipissing, touching Nepigon, and skirting Lasalle, they would be able to pass through a country, certainly not quite equal to some portions of the Dominion, but, both as regarded climate and soil, not inferior to much of the country through which the Intercolonial Railway runs. At the Lake of the Woods, they reached the prairie, which extended for fourteen hundred miles to the westward, and afforded facilities for the construction of a railway unequalled by that through which any railway in the Dominion passed.

As to the resources of the country, they possessed large fisheries, and though they might not have a fish with the colour of a salmon, they had the whitefish, which was far superior in flavour. They, too, had found nuggets of gold, and they were possessed of salt mines which were sufficient to supply the whole Dominion. There were large beds of coal, too, on the Assiniboine and the Saskatchewan, and a great deal of coal oil somewhat north; and besides, there was copper, iron,

lead, etc., in abundance, and in the Peace River district they have a country quite equal to that of the Saskatchewan, and a climate which admitted of wintering herds of cattle out in the prairies, where they grazed throughout the whole year, instead of being obliged to stall-feed them for at least four months as is the case both in Ontario and Quebec.

It had been supposed that the great difficulty in Manitoba was the lack of building material. But the fact was that the shores of Lake Winnipeg would supply large quantities of granite and stone, and there were also extensive beds of clay, which could be used for the manufacture of bricks, and during the year a considerable quantity of bricks had been made. He thought, therefore, that for building material they were pretty well off.

I believe [he concluded] that during the coming year two steamers will be running on Red River, for a distance of one hundred and sixty miles, which will connect that country with the railway system of the United States. On Lake Manitoba (from which to Fort Garry the distance is only sixty miles over a perfectly level country) and the Saskatchewan River there will doubtless be steamers also within a couple of years, thus to a certain extent opening up and giving the means of bringing down the coal and other products of that extensive and valuable district. But, gentlemen, the great *desideratum* is railway communication; and I believe that within ten years the railway will be built, and that the friends of those people who are going from Ontario and Quebec to Manitoba will not let the matter rest, but will continue to press this question of the building as rapidly as possible of the railway to the North-West.

Summoned to Washington

Thus early this question of railway communication possessed him: and ere long he was himself taking practical steps to bring a consummation about. But already he was overdue in another quarter. His services were demanded, not in Ottawa, but in Washington.

From D. McArthur to R. MacFarlane

MONTREAL, 25th February, 1871.

The Governor and Committee have just sent a telegram to Mr. Donald A. Smith to leave Red River (he is there yet) for Washington, consult Sir Stafford Northcote (who is one of the commissioners appointed by the British Government to consider the *Alabama* and other claims and matters in dispute between the British and United States Governments), and proceed at once to London. Dr. Cowan, James Anderson, and R. Campbell are all at home waiting for Smith and are getting impatient, and I fancy it is at their instance that the Board has issued the telegram in question.

The last half-yearly meeting of the shareholders was a noisy one, so much so that Sir C. Lampson threatened to resign. Smith, the Secretary, has resigned and Armit now reigns in his stead.

In the year 1866 the Reciprocity Treaty with America which had been negotiated in 1854 expired. By the terms of that treaty American fishermen were privileged to fish in Canadian waters in return for the right to dispose of certain produce duty free in American markets.

The treaty had worked, on the whole, beneficially both for Canada and the United States; and

it was felt that those growing interests which had been developing and increasing during the existence of the treaty would be greatly aided by a renewal.

On the expiration of the treaty, the right to the exclusive use of the inshore fisheries returned to Canada, but the Imperial Government desired the Canadian Government not to resume at least for a year the right of exclusion, and urged that the prohibition of Americans fishing in those waters should not be put into force. Because of the pressure of Her Majesty's Government, Canada assented, with great reluctance, to the introduction of a system of annual licenses to American fishermen. This was done avowedly for the purpose of asserting Canada's right to the fisheries.

Sir John Macdonald stated in Parliament: —

> Although in 1866 that system was commenced, it did not come immediately into force. We had not then fitted out a marine police force, for we were not altogether without expectation that the mind of the Government of the United States might take a different direction, and that there was a probability of negotiations being renewed respecting the revival of the Reciprocity Treaty; and therefore, although the system was established, it was not rigidly put in force, and no great exertion was made to seize the trespassers who had not taken out licenses.[1]

By the wording of the Convention of 1818, foreign fishermen were only allowed to enter our waters for the purpose of procuring wood, water, and

[1] *Parliamentary Debates*, 1872.

shelter; but they claimed that they had a right, although fishing vessels, to enter our ports for trading purposes. It was alleged by our own fishermen that under pretence of trading, American fishermen were in the habit of invading our fishing grounds, and fishing in our waters. The Canadian Government thought it well, therefore, to press upon the consideration of Her Majesty's Government the propriety of England making on our behalf a demand on the United States Government for reparation for the wrongs known as "the Fenian raids." England agreed to urge American consideration of both these matters, and to ask that all the disputed questions relating to the inshore fisheries under the Convention of 1818 should be settled in some mode to be agreed upon between the two nations, and also to press upon the United States the wrong sustained by Canada at the hands of citizens of the United States who had invaded our country.

Before the Imperial Government had actually made any representations on these two subjects to the American Government, Britain had been engaged on her own behalf in a controversy of a very grave character. The "*Alabama* claims" became a subject of dispute between the two countries, involving the gravest consequences, and hitherto the results had been most unsatisfactory. The well-meant Johnson-Clarendon Treaty had been rejected by the Senate. So long as this question remained unsettled between the two nations there was no possibility of the former friendly relations being restored. Great Britain felt that it was of the

utmost importance to her that those amicable relations should be restored.

The European prestige of Great Britain was certainly affected by the absence of an *entente cordiale* with America. In 1871 British statesmen were deeply interested in the great and serious questions which were then convulsing Europe, and as their country was in danger of being drawn into the conflict, they could not act with the same freedom while the danger existed of the Americans pressing for a settlement of the *Alabama* claims at the very moment when England might be engaged in mortal conflict with another nation.

It was then equally the interest of the Dominion and of the Mother Country that the *Alabama* and other questions threatening the peaceful relations of the two countries should be adjusted. From a commercial point of view, it might have been better, for Canada that the fishery and Fenian questions should have been dealt with apart from the wider Imperial question. But the British Ministry could not, with due self-respect, after the Senate's action, have initiated further proceedings. It was arranged, therefore, that Sir John Macdonald's Government should request a discussion of the fisheries. The American Government, also by arrangement, replied acceding to the request on condition that the larger and graver matters of dispute were also dealt with.

On the 1st of February, 1871, Sir John Macdonald was asked by Her Majesty's Government if he would act as a member of a Joint Commission

to settle all questions between England and the United States.

"When the proposition was first made to me," he subsequently stated, "I must say that I felt considerable embarrassment, and great reluctance to become a member of the Commission. . . . A sense of duty prevailed, and my colleagues pressed upon me also that I would be wanting in my duty to my country if I declined the appointment."[1]

As British Commissioners, Lord de Grey, Sir Stafford Northcote, Professor Bernard, and Sir Edward Thornton, the British Minister at Washington, were to be his colleagues. On February 22, he wrote to Sir John Rose, "I contemplate my visit to Washington with a good deal of anxiety. If anything goes wrong, I shall be made the scape-goat; at all events, so far as Canada is concerned. However, I thought that after all that Canada has done for me, I should not shirk the responsibility." At the beginning of March, Sir John Macdonald arrived in Washington, joining there the assembled British Commissioners.

On the 8th of March, the proceedings began by the American Commissioner, Mr. Fish, stating the *Alabama* case. Not very many sessions occurred before the Canadian Premier realized the calibre and the temper of his English *confrères*. He wrote:

I must say that I am greatly disappointed at the course taken by the British Commissioners. They seem to have only one thing on their minds — that is,

[1] *Parliamentary Debates*; Pope, *Memoirs of Sir John A. Macdonald.*

to go home to England with a treaty in their pockets, settling everything, no matter what its cost to Canada. I was at first a good deal encouraged, because Northcote and Bernard stood by me against any permanent cession of the fisheries, but the four have since gone together against me. It is, therefore, exceedingly unfortunate that Sir Stafford is on the Commission, as his party in England will feel themselves a good deal fettered in Parliament by his action, and will be unable to defend the position which Canada will certainly take. The effect which must be produced on the public mind in Canada by a declaration from both parties in the Imperial Parliament against our course will greatly prejudice the idea of British connection, as British protection will have proved itself a farce. I do not like to look at the consequences, but we are so clearly in the right that we must throw the responsibility on England.[1]

At this juncture Mr. Smith, who had just taken his seat in the Canadian Parliament, arrived in Washington, to confer both with his political chief, Sir John Macdonald, and with Sir Stafford Northcote, Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company.

During the next few weeks Mr. Smith's loyalty to his two principals was subjected to trial. On the 16th of April, Sir John Macdonald wrote: —

Sir Stafford Northcote has disappointed me altogether. I think he feels now that he has put himself in a false position by coming here.

On April 18 Mr. Smith wrote to Lampson: —

[1] Letter to the Honourable Charles Tupper, April 1, 1871.

Northcote's Position

To-day Sir Stafford told me that he would as soon change places with a galley-slave as endure his present situation a month or six weeks longer. He thinks it bad enough to fight the Americans and to be continually "rapped over the knuckles" by the Foreign Office, but that Sir John Macdonald's hostility and distrust are unbearable.

On the other hand: —

Sir John told me that he was fully alive to the grave responsibility resting upon the Commissioners and especially upon himself as representing Canada. If the treaty were unacceptable to the Senate they would reject it, and a friendly member of that body had told him that "another rejection would mean war." Nevertheless, he was not going to be frightened out of doing his duty and he had been immensely relieved at receiving Lord Kimberley's assurance that Canada's rights in her fisheries were admitted and would not be overridden in this or any other treaty.

After dinner Sir Stafford explained to me broadly the results he hoped might accrue from the proposed treaty, apart from its definite object in removing all present causes of friction between the two great powers immediately concerned. If Great Britain and America would agree on a definition of contraband of war, and agree to the principle of a joint tribunal to settle disputes, other powers might be brought in and represented on such a tribunal, which would permanently fix the rights and duties of neutrals. I agreed that this would be a great gain, but that we as Canadians could hardly be expected to centre our attention on ulterior advantages, when we had so much directly and immediately at stake.

Sir John makes no secret of the fact that he is dissatisfied with the tone adopted by the British Commissioners, which is far too complacent. He says they pride themselves on their magnanimity, but that their magnanimity costs them nothing, where Canada is concerned. The Americans talk and act throughout as men who are resolved to have their own way. They know that England dare not press her case forward as if war were the alternative to settlement by arbitration.[1]

Friday, 21st April — Sir John had not received any reply to his urgent message to Sir George Cartier when Sir Stafford showed him a copy of a telegram from Lord Granville, instructing Lord de Grey to agree to a settlement of the fisheries in a manner which must prove disadvantageous to us. Sir John was quite beside himself. He said he was going to pack up and go home; the proceedings were and had been a farce, and he would rather cut off his right hand than sign such articles. Sir Stafford at once exclaimed upon the unwisdom of this course, to which Sir John replied that as the representative of Canada he owed a duty to his own people; that his colleagues would repudiate him if he acted otherwise; that no Englishman could possibly be expected to share his feelings; and that if Canadian interests were to be sacrificed, it would be political ruin for him to appear as a party to the sacrifice.

When leaving me, he said that Cartier's silence was awkward, but he knew that his action would be approved. I pointed out to him that in my judgment his action would be most unwise, because the whole treaty would certainly be carried through, and that it was by no means too late to affect its ultimate character for

[1] *Memorandum* inscribed, "For Mr. Cunningham."

our benefit, and that he must contest the articles inch by inch. He retorted that he liked fighting in the open, and not "struggling in muddy water with sharks." He did not appear at dinner, and I feared he had actually carried out his threat. The next morning, however, he announced that he had reconsidered his decision. Sir Stafford and I were in consequence greatly relieved.[1]

Writing to his wife, on April 22, Sir Stafford says, "Macdonald seems to think that he has stood out long enough; certainly it has been longer than our idea of long enough." [2]

To Dr. Tupper, the Canadian Premier wrote (April 27): —

My first impulse, I confess, was to hand in my resignation. . . . After thinking it over for a night, however, I refrained from doing so, reserving to myself the right of ulterior action. It was fortunate that I did so, else the Articles would have been much worse than they are. The lease of the fisheries would have been for twenty-five years instead of for ten with notice. Fish oil would have been excluded, and only the fish proved to have been caught in the inshore fisheries admitted. These alterations, it may perhaps be said, are of no consequence, as Canada is certain to reject the treaty *in toto*. I felt, however, that I ought not to throw away any chance for Canada, and it is quite on the cards that England, in her desire to settle all matters with the United States, may be forced to offer a substantial compensation to Canada as an inducement to our

[1] *Journal of High Commission*, addressed to Sir Curtis Lampson.
[2] Lang's *Iddesleigh*.

Parliament to secure to the United States citizens the use of the Welland, St. Lawrence, and other canals, and the United States agrees to do the same thing with respect to its State canals. This article shows expressly that the canals are not a portion of the St. Lawrence, but are within the sole control of Canada.[1]

On Monday morning (the 24th) Sir John showed Mr. Smith a telegram he had received from Cartier saying, characteristically, "Those fellows up there have utterly spoilt my plans by their procrastination." It was the message he had been awaiting the whole of the previous week. The message ran as follows: —

We are sensible of the gravity of the position and alive to the deep interest which Canada has in the settlement of all disputes between Great Britain and the United States. The Queen's Government, having formally pledged herself that our fisheries should not be disposed of without our consent, to force us now into a disposal of them for a sum, to be fixed by arbitration, and free fish, would be a breach of faith, and an indignity never before offered to a great British possession. The people of Canada were ready to exchange the right of fishing for reciprocal trade rights to be agreed upon; but, if these cannot be obtained, she prefers to retain her fisheries, and she protests against the course which, against her will, is being pursued with reference to her interests and property. We were never informed that the fisheries would have been inextricably mixed up with the *Alabama* question, and could not have apprehended that an attempt would be made to coerce us into an unwilling disposal of them

[1] Pope, *Memoirs of Sir John A. Macdonald.*

to obtain results, however important, on other points in dispute. Our Parliament would never consent to a treaty on the basis now proposed and if persisted in, you would withdraw from the Commission.

To Dr. Tupper, on the 27th, Sir John Macdonald describes the arguments on the inland navigation articles: —

Then it happened that Donald A. Smith mentioned to Sir Stafford Northcote and myself that it was of great importance to the North-West to secure the free navigation of the three rivers mentioned in Item 8. He says that the use of the Yukon is absolutely indispensable. That already American vessels from San Francisco carry goods via the Yukon into our country at rates much cheaper than they can be conveyed by any other route. The Stickine River, he says, goes through a gold country, and its navigation is of importance. The Porcupine is a branch of the Yukon. As the Americans contended for the general principle, they were obliged to consent with respect to these three rivers.[1]

On April 29, the Premier could write Tupper: —

The rights of Canada being substantially preserved by reserving to her the veto power as to the fisheries,

[1] Article XXVI of the Treaty read: "The United States engage that the rivers Yukon, Porcupine, and Stickine in Alaska, ascending and descending from, to, and into the sea, shall forever remain free and open for the purpose of commerce to the subjects of Great Britain."

The Treaty of Washington was signed on May 8, 1871. In the following year it was ratified by the Canadian Parliament and went into operation on July 1, 1873, and continued in force for twelve years.

I am sincerely desirous that a treaty should be made, as it is of the greatest importance that the *Alabama* and San Juan matters should be settled, especially the former. The expectations by the American people of a settlement of these matters have been strung to a very high pitch, and the disappointment, in case the negotiations end in nothing, will be very great. If this attempt to settle the *Alabama* question should fail, no peaceable solution of it is possible and the war cloud will hang over England and Canada.

Canada has the game all in her own hands. All fear of war will have to be averted, and between now and next February, when Parliament meets, our Government will have plenty of time to consider the whole position. The American fishermen having been excluded from our waters for two seasons, their clamour will be very great, and the importance of finally settling the question will be increased in the minds of the two Governments of Great Britain and the United States. Canada may then be in a position to say that she must get pecuniary compensation from England, and liberal tariff arrangements with the United States. I need not, however, dilate on this subject, which we can talk over at leisure when we arrive at Ottawa.[1]

On the whole subject of arbitration in national disputes, Judge Hoar, one of the American Commissioners, told a story which very much impressed Sir Stafford Northcote as illustrating the general opinion. A man came into court and called the judge a d——d fool. The judge threatened to commit him for contempt of court. The man begged to refer the question to the arbitrament of a jury.

[1] Pope, *Memoirs of Sir John A. Macdonald.*

The judge consented, whereon the jury decided that his referring to them proved he was a d——d fool, and gave their award accordingly.

The Geneva arbitrators appointed under the Treaty of Washington also "gave their award accordingly" when the time came to settle the *Alabama* claims.[1]

No sooner had the Hudson's Bay Company's Governor and its chief representative in North America concluded their business in Washington than an imperative duty summoned them to London. A vital matter was pending connected with the fur-trade. This had been postponed from time to time and could not be much longer evaded. I have already referred to the abrogation of the Deed Poll between the Company in London and its wintering partners, which had been in existence with slight modification since 1821.

The whole question of the compensation claimed by the Chief Factors and Chief Traders had been canvassed freely on both sides ever since the transfer of Rupert's Land to Canada was agreed upon by the Board. In 1870, Chief Trader Roderick MacFarlane had visited London and pressed the matter upon Sir Stafford Northcote. The whole of this transaction is an important and curious one in our history. It well deserves to have further light shed upon it. In a letter to Sir Stafford the view of the wintering partners is expressed very clearly by the aforementioned leading officer of the Company.

[1] Lang's *Iddesleigh*, vol. II.

Chief Trader R. MacFarlane to Sir Stafford Northcote

LONDON, 15th June, 1870.

DEAR SIR STAFFORD: —

With reference to the subject of our conversation at the Hudson's Bay House yesterday respecting the feeling prevailing amongst the "wintering partners" as to their right to participate in the indemnity of £300,000 paid by Canada, for the relinquishment of our right of territory and exclusive trade in Rupert's Land, you intimated a wish to have their views submitted to you in a definite shape for your consideration.

The subject is a large one and I regret that the very few hours at my disposal, before leaving London, will not allow me to go into it so fully as I could wish. But I should be glad to submit a few general points to your notice in the hope that they may be deemed worthy of your attention and that of the Directors before the claims of the Chief Factors and Chief Traders are finally and irrevocably set aside.

The fact that the Directors here obtained a legal opinion against the view that the shareholders are entitled to the whole of the indemnity cannot be fairly assumed to dispose of the claims of the wintering partners, inasmuch as every one knows that the validity of a lawyer's opinion depends entirely on the case submitted to him; and as we have never had an opportunity of submitting our side of the question to legal investigation, the opinion on which the Directors appear to rely is, so far, merely a one-sided one. To show that such an opinion cannot always be relied on, I need only refer to the somewhat similar divergence of views which occurred a short time ago in connection

with the Fenchurch Street property in the improved value of which it was thought by some of the Company in London that the wintering partners had no pecuniary interest. The result of a friendly suit at last proved, however, that they had, and I venture with all respect to suggest if the shareholders continue to maintain their individual right to the indemnity that a similar suit should again be instituted in order that we may have an authoritative decision on a point of so much importance to us, and I will add to the shareholders themselves, who will in the end be the greatest gainers by acting with fairness and generosity to the wintering partners. What I would ask is, that in common fairness we should have an opportunity of taking a legal opinion upon our view of the case, as well as the shareholders in London, and that the matter should not be disposed of by an *ex-parte* decision such as that on which I understand the Directors at present rely. I am not a lawyer, but it does not appear to me to require any legal knowledge to point out that as the monopoly of our trade depends on our possession of the country where the trade is carried on, the selling of the land, so to speak, from under the trade, is an obvious and palpable injury to that trade, and an injury consequently to us whose incomes are entirely dependent on the profits of the trade. It is impossible to dissociate the land from the trade, as the trade without the land is obviously a very different thing from what it was when both the land and the trade were ours.

At the meeting of the Northern Council at Norway House in the previous summer the members had deputed Mr. Smith to proceed to England at

the earliest opportunity and present their claims before the Governor and Committee. Toward the close of the year, he wrote to Mr. MacFarlane.

Donald A. Smith to R. MacFarlane

Fort Garry, 15th December, 1870.

I have read with much interest your observations in regard to our interests in the Fur-Trade and the position in which we stand toward the shareholders at home, and you may rest assured your representations will be carefully considered and be used for the general good.

I shall not fail to urge on the Board the necessity and justice of dealing most liberally with the officers in the country and have much hope of success.

Naturally, having pinned their faith to Mr. Smith, every officer in the service awaited anxiously the result of his mission to London. Chief Factor Roderick McKenzie wrote to Mr. MacFarlane: —

From our isolated position and want of unison and unanimity, the Directors and shareholders are doing all they can to deprive us of our heritage. By last accounts Mr. Smith was on his way to Montreal. In London several officers are awaiting Mr. Smith's arrival to enter into the details of our case. The sharks are numerous and powerful, and it will need our united action to escape their ravenous gullets. . . . The death of Governor Mactavish has deprived us of a guiding power as well as a friendly and judicious coadjutor. His kind and gentle sway will be remembered with regret by all who knew him.

His Arrival awaited

Another Factor (Mr. D. MacArthur) wrote: —

I can answer for it that there is not a single officer in this department, with perhaps the exception of one in Lake Superior, who would not give his entire concurrence to your opinions and sentiments in the matters now and for some time past in dispute between the Directors and the commissioned officers.

Thus the whole *personnel* of the fur-trade was deeply concerned in Chief Commissioner Smith's errand to London. Several, as we have just seen, had crossed the ocean and were awaiting him there. Amongst these was Chief Factor Campbell, from whose letters to a fellow-officer a further insight into the situation may be obtained.

Chief Factor Campbell to R. MacFarlane

CONNIE, PERTHSHIRE, SCOTLAND,
31st January, 1871.

I did not visit the Hudson's Bay House, London, till invited to attend the great meeting of shareholders, 22d November. Mr. James Anderson, C.F., and myself were present of the Hudson's Bay officers. We both met a very kind and frank reception from the Governor and Deputy Governor and Board. But, as for the shareholders, we were perfectly disgusted with the greed and selfishness they evinced in their speeches and a great many were present at the meeting.

. . . You will be saying what steps have been taken since we came home this season to settle this long pending affair between the Hudson's Bay Board and the fur-traders? Nothing. How can we broach the subject when the delegate to whom the whole was made over

by the Council is still in Red River. His non-arrival is a great disappointment to us. It is expected he will be here in course of March, and should this be the case, I hope something will be done.

. . . Judge Black, Dr. Cowan, Mr. James Anderson, C.F., and myself have often met. We were lately for some days together for social chat in Edinburgh. . . . Mr. Anderson, who I only saw first after his arrival home, is a very nice, first-rate man. We have been much together since he arrived in Scotland. . . . When I was in the north I spent some days with Mr. N. Finlayson, a fine old gentleman. Mr. Christie, I saw frequently. He is very frail now, but very kind, as he ever was. He is very glad when old Hudson's Bay friends call upon him.

Four months later he again wrote recording Mr. Smith's arrival: —

R. Campbell to R. MacFarlane

LONDON, 2d June, 1871.

I would have availed sooner the pleasure of replying to your last, but deferred day by day, in the hope that some definite settlement between the Board of Directors and us would have been arrived at, ere I would write you, but I am sorry to say that matters are still "in statu quo" just as you saw them. Mr. James Anderson, C.F., Cowan, and myself went up to meet Mr. D. A. Smith on his arrival. He arrived the 10th May, and here on the morning of the 12th. We met Mr. Lawrence Clark there, and all of us dined with Mr. Smith that evening. Mr. Smith presented his letter to the Board on arrival as the appointed delegate

from the Northern Council; but though we remained there two whole weeks, they [the Board] had made no reply to the letter when we left, the 26th, nor were they likely to do so till the return of Sir Stafford Northcote from Washington. He sailed from New York the 24th May, and is expected in England about the 5th instant, and no doubt shortly after there will be a meeting of the Board, and probably shareholders too, to discuss this and other subjects in connection with Hudson's Bay affairs.

Mr. Smith is to give us due notice of what is transpiring, and most likely we will have to go up to London again. We kept aloof from the Directors when there, as, in fact, we had no business with them; the whole business is in Mr. Smith's hands, who repeatedly said to us that he was determined to keep to the letter of his instructions, and would not back out till the matter was brought to an issue. I have no doubt the Board are well disposed to us and inclined to do us all the justice in their power; but the shareholders are wild in front of them, so that the Directors are wedged in on all sides, and are in a bad fix. I have no doubt the next meeting of shareholders will be a stormy one, and if the nature and working of the whole business of the fur-trade is properly explained and understood, I have some hope that matters may end in a satisfactory manner to all parties; but if the reverse, it may end in a regular crash. But it is no use now to comment on this sad business, which has been allowed to drag on for years for want of any Chief Factor or Chief Trader to move a step in the matter, when it would have been easily adjusted, and it would be equally vain, at this moment, to guess what the issue may be. Once this is adjusted, a settlement for the past seven years arrived

at and closed, then, and not till then, some plan of organization must be come to, and settled.

As to the future management and carrying on of the fur-trade, in Hudson's Bay, this requires serious consideration, and to have a proper well-organized system of trade established and to place the right man in the right place. The Northern and Montreal departments are at this moment going to ruin for want of supervision, and this you know as well as I.

On the 6th of July, Mr. Smith faced the excited shareholders of the Hudson's Bay Company. One wintering partner, Chief Factor John Fortescue, thus described the scene: —

Sir Stafford, as you know, was absent, on Mr. Smith's arrival in England, but as soon as he got home, Mr. Smith lost no time in laying our propositions before the Board. Sir Stafford seemed inclined to concede to the wintering partners, but the Board showed the most determined opposition. They absolutely laughed at the guarantee — and I am sorry to say that their letter to the Council of April, 1865, bore them out; it was expressly specified as so many years, which we of course interpreted "outfits." They declined any compromise whatever, and it was only by holding over them *in terrorem* the possibility of our throwing them over altogether in a body that they consented to consider the case and lay the affair before the shareholders. The result, after three or four stormy meetings, ultimately was that the Board was empowered to make arrangements to satisfy us. I must tell you, moreover, that our rights were submitted to legal authority and we were strongly advised not to proceed to extremity, as the event was very uncertain.

Mr. Smith then demanded the vacant shares to be filled up, but this was refused. The Company assert their right to appoint when they please or not to appoint at all. The old Deed Poll was, I believe, doubtfully worded in this respect, and I am sorry to say that this has given serious offence to many of our Senior Clerks, who think themselves passed over and that no efforts were made in their behalf at home. The effort was made, but without avail. A compromise had to be effected and I believe Mr. Smith made the best terms he could.[1] . . . Each officer's separate claim was taken into consideration and the gross total made up the sum of £107,055. The general idea is that the company voted £107,055 of spare cash to the satisfying of our claims, which amount was subsequently divided in the proportions against our names, but such is not the case. Each officer's guarantee was first taken and insisted upon and then his retiring interest as proposed by our Council of 1870.

I am informed that when Mr. Smith found the Oregon claim was not allowed, he increased that sum demanded for retiring interest under the first arrangement; therefore you realize about £675 for retiring share and the balance, £480, or nearly so, is for your guarantee. This is really how these amounts were made up, and this if calculated gives those large amounts for the Factors which at first I thought so

[1] "I consider an acknowledgment of the right of the wintering partners to share in the proceeds, not only of the present sale of lands, but of all future sales, as the only certain means which you possess of attaching permanently to your service the class of experienced officers and servants the Company has always commanded in Rupert's Land. Moreover, if their claim to a share of the indemnity paid by Canada is rejected, they are advised to take steps to test their claim by the process of law." (Donald A. Smith to the Shareholders.)

unjust. Nominally they do not admit the guarantee.

The meetings were more than stormy; they were tumultuous. I think the basis of reorganization is a good one if carried out properly. It will, I am sure, increase our dividends.

On his return to Canada, Mr. Smith thus summarizes the result of his mission: —

Donald A. Smith to Colin Rankin

Fort Garry, 26th Sept., 1871.

. . . Sir Stafford and the Directors generally evinced an earnest desire to have this important matter disposed of without loss of time, but the difficulties in the way of an adjustment were such that it was not until late in July an arrangement acceptable to the parties interested was concluded; a delay readily accounted for by the fact that after the terms of agreement had been settled, between the Board and myself, the consent of the proprietors had to be obtained to a measure, the first and most apparent result of which would be to compel them to pay to their officers a sum exceeding one eighth of the entire capital of the Company at its then value.

Ultimately, however, notwithstanding a most determined opposition on the part of many of their number, the shareholders gave their sanction to the terms of the agreement. I have now the pleasure of transmitting this, not doubting that it will be satisfactory to you, as it has been to all the other officers to whom it has been submitted. The Power of Attorney with which I was entrusted by you fully empowered me to act for you in all respects as if you had been personally pres-

ent; but I deemed it better to execute the agreement in so far as you were concerned, subject to its ratification by your own signature.

Chief Factor Robert Hamilton wrote: —

Mr. Smith fought a hard battle for us, and I do not believe there is a man in or out of the country who would have secured us such terms.

My old friend Chief Factor James Anderson was up in London during the greater part of the time that the negotiations were going forward, and he writes me in high terms of the admirable conduct and unflinching determination of Mr. Smith.

Another Factor, Mr. Lockhart, wrote: —

Little Whale River, 28th December, 1871.

The terms of the new agreement seem to have given almost universal satisfaction. For my own part, I think them more liberal than many of us expected. I have seen Mr. G. S. McTavish, who was chairman at the grand spread given to Mr. Smith on his arrival in Montreal after completion of his plenipotentiary labours, and he tells me that all who were there expressed their satisfaction at the liberality of the terms, and their high hopes for the future of the fur. As regards the latter point, I cannot say that I am so sanguine, but for our own sake let us hope and strive for the best.

In spite of the applause with which his efforts on behalf of the wintering partners were greeted on his return to Canada, it is certain that Mr. Smith was never quite satisfied with his part in the transaction. He came to see, with greater and growing

clearness, what few in the fur-trade then saw — not merely the potential value of the land in the North-West, but the justice of the claims of the wintering partners to a share in the land.

"If you can show that land has ever been sold for the benefit of the fur-trade, like goods and agricultural produce, the whole question would be settled."[1] Alas, it could not be settled when the officers of the fur-trade refused to accept any consideration of land, the value of which was so remote. "I ought to have pressed it on them," he once told an old friend, Chief Factor Anderson. "But really, it seemed such up-hill work and I had so much to do."

It was in reference to the Washington Treaty, and perhaps also to the Red River affair that Mr. Smith wrote a significant and prophetic passage in one of his letters to an English statesman:—

Donald A. Smith to Robert Lowe

London, 19th June, 1871.

Throughout all this unhappy business I am aware that Canada and her domestic affairs have tried the patience of England and her statesmen, who are, I doubt not, deeply preoccupied elsewhere. I gather that some would like to be free from these colonial entanglements. But I hope to live to see the time when the Dominion of Canada will be strong enough and rich and prosperous enough to lift the burden from the

[1] J. Anderson to D. A. Smith.
[2] Afterwards Earl of Sherbrooke.

shoulders of the mother country and even to help you to bear some burdens properly your own.

Compare this passage with the utterance, equally proud and confident, of his political chief, Sir John Macdonald, in the following year, when he declared in the Canadian House of Commons: —

I hope to live to see the day, and if I do not, that my son may be spared, to see Canada the right arm of England, to see Canada a powerful auxiliary to the Empire, not as now a cause of anxiety and a source of danger.[1]

Has Canada fulfilled that trust — is she not now (1915) justifying, on the battlefields of Europe, that hope?

[1] *Parliamentary Debates*, 1872.

CHAPTER XIII

ANNEXATION AND AMNESTY

1871

HARDLY do Canadians of this generation recognize by what narrow margin of chance Manitoba and indeed a large portion of the fertile belt in Rupert's Land was saved to Canada and the Empire. Many and potent, though not always patent, forces had been working in the direction of the annexation of the country to the American Republic. Two separate factors frustrated the attempt. The steadfast political faith of the one, and the ambitions and fears of the other, averted from Manitoba the destiny of Texas and Oregon.

A quarter of a century later Mr. (then Sir Donald) Smith thus surveyed the situation: —

What were the circumstances of the country, and what were the relations of England and Canada to the neighbouring Republic at that time? We all know that there was anything but a friendly feeling, indeed that there was a very bitter feeling between the two countries; for the *Alabama* difficulty had not yet been settled, and the Joint High Commission had not disposed of those very important issues relating to the two countries which grew out of the Civil War in the United States. At that time, unhappily, too, we had not the same feeling of cordiality on the part of the mother country toward the Colonies that we have to-

day. The change is, indeed, a happy one; but as showing the position of the North-West, showing upon what the people of the Red River in a great measure depended, namely, the sympathy of those in the neighbouring States of America, when they rose in insurrection against the mother country and against Canada, I may be permitted to read an authority on that point. I have in my hand a newspaper, which will be taken as good authority, I have no doubt, for it is the official organ of the Provincial Government of that day. It is called the *New Nation*. In it we have the following headings: "Consolidation"; "The Future of the American Continent"; "One Flag"; "Natural Lines East Prevail." It goes on to say:—

"Again we present our readers with the views of the outside world on the Red River struggle for freedom. As the direct result of that struggle, we hear once more, but in louder and more determined tones, an enunciation of that great doctrine of which some of the illustrious men in this world have been the expounders.

"That over all this broad continent — from ocean to ocean — but one flag shall wave — but one Empire be dominant. It is a vision of a grand consolidation of peoples and interests, such as can be paralleled nowhere else among the kingdoms of the earth. It is a vision the realization of which has always been regarded but as a matter of time, and which is now, we believe, nearer to fulfilment than many would suppose. It will be seen that we in Red River are credited with having largely aided in the movement to bring about this golden future; and that sympathy and best wishes for our success are ours from many quarters. In the beginning of the uprising in this colony, it was said — and truthfully said — that many who saw the begin-

ning of that movement then inaugurated, could not see the end. That end — it will be our business, from time to time, to show our readers — will be the extension of liberty on this continent, a breaking-down of artificial barriers of diverse nationalites which divide and estrange the dwellers in the new world, — and the creation of a magnificent power, whose influence on the rest of the world shall herald a brighter and better day.

"That Red River, the keystone of the confederacy projected by England, will never go under the authority of the Dominion, is now apparent. The keystone having given way, the rest of the fabric will topple speedily; and in its place, we repeat, will be upreared an unbroken undivided Empire, such as nature seems to have prepared the way for on this Continent."

From the *New York Sun* Sir Donald quoted the following:—

"The tendency of events on this North American continent is plainly toward the consolidation of all the peoples dwelling upon it into one great nation, around the present United States as a nucleus. From the Polar Sea to the Isthmus of Darien there will be in time but one government and one rational power. Canada, Rupert's Land, Victoria, Mexico will have but one flag and eventually Cuba and her sister island will join us. Thus united, we can defy the world and offer a boundless asylum to the oppressed of every clime and country. Who among us can say that ours is not a glorious destiny, or reflect without exultation that he is an American citizen?"

Many at the present day have very little notion of the then circumstances of the country. There was unquestionably a very great and imminent danger at

that time of the country being absorbed into the United States. That fact was brought to my recollection by a gentleman of high position in Minnesota, whom I met the other day as I passed through that country, who stated that he knew of persons then ready to place a very large sum of money at the disposal of Mr. Riel and his friends, upwards of half a million dollars, with the view of having the country annexed to the United States. We should also remember that at that time there was much ill-feeling and much bitterness between England and the United States; that without railways, with a trackless wilderness and some five hundred miles to traverse, it was impossible in less time than two months, to send a single soldier to that territory, with all the power of Great Britain and Canada; that while the insurrection began in October, and Fort Garry was taken possession of in November, it was not until the latter part of August following that it was practicable for Field Marshal Wolseley, then Colonel Wolseley, to bring his forces up to Red River.[1]

It is clear, then, that circumstances were favorable to the attempt if made swiftly, adroitly, and with decision. The reactionary statesmen of England were chafing at the expense and responsibilities to which the Colonial connection exposed them. Sir Stafford Northcote could write in his Ottawa diary in the spring of 1870, that Canadians

fancied that England would gladly be rid of them; and what with fishery quarrels and their own divisions,

[1] Speech of Sir Donald A. Smith, *Parliamentary Debates*, March, 1896.

they are certainly rather a luxurious ornament of the Empire. Filibusters were said to be ready to go against Riel if troops were not sent. The United States officers sent warnings of Fenian attempts on bridges. Altogether the prospects were warlike.

Mr. Donald Smith also reported the Company would lose £100,000, and would find it hard to get compensation. Moreover, the fur-trade was ceasing to be remunerative; the Company must look for other dealings than in minks and silver foxes. Perhaps the worst news was that some of the Company's officers were thought to have abetted Riel. They, too, had their objections to the transfer of land and the Canadian domination.

The Americans, on their part, were smarting under a sense of British official hostility to them during the long struggle against the Southern Confederacy. Sir John Macdonald had already written:

It is quite evident to me, not only from this conversation, but from advices from Washington that the United States Government are resolved to do all they can, short of war, to get possession of the western territory, and we must take immediate and vigorous steps to counteract them.

The Legislature of Minnesota had not been wanting in an audacious word of encouragement. In March, 1868, the following resolutions were adopted and communicated to the Government at Washington: —

Resolved: That we regret to be informed of a purpose to transfer the territory between Minnesota and Alaska to the Dominion of Canada by an Order-in-

Council at London without a vote of Selkirk and the settlers upon the sources of the Saskatchewan River, who largely consist of emigrants from the United States; and we would respectfully urge that the President and Congress of the United States shall represent to the Government of Great Britain that such action will be an unwarrantable interference with the principles of self-government, and cannot be regarded with indifference by the people of the United States.

That the Legislature of Minnesota would rejoice to be assured that the cession of North-West British America to the United States, accompanied by the construction of a Northern Pacific Railway, are regarded by Great Britain and Canada as satisfactory provisions of a treaty which shall remove all these grounds of controversy between the respective countries.

Commenting at the close of the following year on these resolutions the Minneapolis *Tribune* observed: —

These friendly suggestions failed to change the Anglo-Canadian policy, and it now remains for the Ottawa Ministry to determine whether it is not still expedient to authorize some formal expression by the inhabitants of Selkirk. Perhaps, also, the Canadians might find in the proposition of a cession of the North-West Territory to the United States a potent agency to secure access to American markets on terms even more satisfactory than by the abrogated treaty of June, 1854. At present, even if Mr. McDougall makes his way to Fort Garry, this North-West acquisition, with its half-breed and Indian incumbency, will be a burden and a snare to Canada; but if its transfer to the United States

will assist to a commercial union with the United States, will it not be better, not only for Canada, but for the Honourable William McDougall himself, whom we hereby nominate as the first United States Senator from Selkirk?

The same newspaper further informed its readers: —

We have reason to believe that the Fenian organization is at the bottom of the Red River movement; that the Fenian leaders have been secretly at work for several months to bring it about, and that their later plans have been chiefly directed to their consummation. The present occurrences in the Red River country form the beginning of the execution of an entirely new Fenian programme, for which it is claimed that the organization has more means in hand and better preparations than it ever had before. Should it be the fact that their plans have taken the direction of such an initiative, the Fenian leaders are certainly to be credited with more shrewdness than has hitherto been evinced by them. The fertile British territory beyond Lake Superior is absolutely indefensible by Canada or England. Neither troops nor supplies can be conveyed to it in the winter season except through the United States. A small Fenian force will suffice to wrest it from the Dominion and the Crown; and the territory is of immense extent and value. Its Fenian capture would be a decidedly hard blow, both morally and materially, to the power, Imperial and Colonial, at which Fenian hostility is aimed. Whatever further direction the operations of the Fenian Brotherhood may take, it is expected, in their own ranks and by both the Canadian and American authorities, that the

coming winter will see active undertakings of some sort.

Relying, then, upon the divisions amongst the people at Red River, the Fenian organization again showed its hand. It now began to make a systematic effort to wrest a vast territory from British control. They had been foiled in 1866; the leaders considered the present time more propitious. Now they could link arms with the avowed annexationists at Red River.

Sir John Macdonald wrote to Mr. Rose (31st December, 1869): —

We have undoubted information that the insurgents have been in communication with the Fenian body in New York, and letters have been interchanged. O'Donohue, the young priest, has thrown off the ecclesiastical garb, and avowed himself a Fenian. The governing body at New York will send neither men nor money, but have been most liberal with promises. They have, I believe, sent an agent to stir them up. It is said that General Spear, one of the United States generals of the last war, and whom you may remember to have been in command at St. Alban's in '66, is the man who has gone.[1]

[1] The little girl's quaint definition of a lie, as "an abomination to the Lord, but an ever-present help in time of trouble," was illustrated by Mr. Howe's friend and companion on the Red River excursion, a late Dominion Senator. This gentleman's patriotic aberration from strict truth undoubtedly cast away the plans of a number of dangerous filibusters. He wrote Howe (18th November, 1869): "On my arrival in St. Paul, when passing through St. Cloud and other of those villages, I found a great many rough men collecting and preparing for the Prairies, just the class who would only be too ready to filibuster, and, knowing that in a week they could be

Again on the 11th of March he writes to Mr. Rose: —

The propositions adopted at the Red River Conference are, most of them, reasonable enough, and can easily be disposed of with their delegates. Things look well enough, were we only assured of Riel's good faith. But the unpleasant suspicion remains that he is only wasting time by sending this delegation, until the approach of summer enables him to get material support from the United States. It is believed by many that he is in the pay of the United States. We may settle upon the terms of the constitution to be granted to the North-West with the delegates when they arrive here, and pass an Act for the purpose, but that will not prevent Riel from refusing to ratify the arrangement, if he pleases. Meanwhile, he is in possession of the country, and is consolidating his Government. The foolish and criminal attempt of Boulton and ——— to renew the fight has added greatly to Riel's strength. He has put down two distinct attempts to upset his Government, and the American sympathizers will begin to argue that his Government has acquired a legal status, and he will be readily persuaded of that fact himself.

Another observer, J. M. Reid, had reported of Riel and his associates, "The truth is they receive an amount of moral aid, if no other, from the States. Yankeedom is at the bottom of the whole ruction,

out of the way, I put into the paper an account of Mr. MacDougall's safe arrival. But I told a lie, I believe for my country's good, as I saw enough to feel convinced that a half-dozen designing men could have easily gathered from this force material enough to make a small army to coöperate with the annexation interest." (Original in *Privy Council Archives*.)

but they manage things adroitly." At Red River, Major H. N. Robinson had founded a paper openly preaching annexation.[1] Another named McKinney had informed Governor McDougall's emissary, Major Wallace, that, in his judgment, "the United States was the natural outlet for the Settlement and the people wanted nothing else." Another declared that, should the contingency arise, he would at any time sign a memorial to the United States Government asking their permission to "annex ourselves to them." According to another, "If we fail in our efforts to arrange with Canada, another element would be called in, and the men at the head of this movement just know how to get them, and that is the Fenians." Even Governor Mactavish himself thought annexation the "manifest destiny" of the country.

Amongst the leaders of the annexation movement was a bizarre individual, who called himself "Colonel" Enos Stuttsman, whose personal activity and martial ardor triumphed over the distressing circumstance of his having been born legless

[1] The following headlines taken from its first issue, are sufficiently illuminating: —

CONFEDERATION!

THE BRITISH AMERICAN PROVINCES!

Proposed Annexation to the United States, Etc.

ANNEXATION!

BRITISH COLUMBIA DEFYING THE DOMINION!

Annexation our Manifest Destiny!

and armless.[1] It was this personage who undertook to address the Chief Magistrate of the Republic in the following terms: —

E. Stuttsman to President Grant

PEMBINA, D.T.,
November 2nd, 1869.

SIR, —

I should be deficient in my duty both as an official and as an American citizen if I did not solemnly call your attention to the situation as it exists in this part of the Continent of North America and the opportunity it offers for instant and decisive action on the part of the Government of the United States. At this moment this country is properly without any government, and a large number of its inhabitants, the majority, I believe, are favourably disposed to its annexation by the United States.

ENOS STUTTSMAN.

Throughout the autumn and winter of 1870, Riel's confederate, O'Donohue, was busy in making his plans for an invasion. Of this man we are told that he was "one of those miserable beings who seem to inherit the vices of every calling and nationality to which they can claim a kindred. Educated for some semi-clerical profession which he abandoned for the more congenial trade of treason, rendered

[1] Letter from McDougall to Howe, Pembina, November 5, 1869: "A Mr. Stuttsman, an ex-official of the Treasury Department, who has resided here some time, now doing business as a sort of village lawyer, and reputed to be a man of considerable influence, met the insurgents as they rode up to Hudson's Bay Company's post on Tuesday, and held a short parley with them."

apparently secure by distance, he remained in garb the cleric while he plundered his prisoners and indulged in the fashionable pastime of gambling with purloined property and racing with confiscated horses — a man whose revolting countenance at once suggested hulks and prison garbs, and who in any other land save America, would probably long since have reached the convict level for which nature destined him." [1]

In his schemes O'Donohue was abetted by the once notorious "General" O'Neill, who had taken part in the rebellion against the United States in the late war. One of his martial proceedings had been to recruit, in 1864, from the Andersonville prison pens, a regiment of seven hundred Irishmen for the Confederate service. He persuaded these "Fenians" to desert and forswear the flag of their adopted country, whose bounty and service they had voluntarily accepted. The alternative of remaining half-starved prisoners of war was doubtless tempting to them, as it could hardly have been to any true-born American, or to any honest naturalized American citizen or soldier.

In 1868, the Fenians had obtained from the Government the return of the arms seized in the St. Albans raid, consisting of about thirteen hundred muskets, and again proceeded to organize an expedition against Canada. Later in the same year a Fenian Congress was held at Philadelphia, and the leader O'Neill marched through the town at the head of three regiments of the so-styled "Irish

[1] Butler, *The Great Lone Land.*

Republican" army in green uniforms, numbering, it was reported, three thousand men.

During the years 1869–70, the Fenians made fresh military preparations. O'Neill wrote to the Circles that a Congress of the Fenian Brotherhood was ordered to meet in New York on the 8th of March, and desired them to send none but the best and most reliable men, and if it be possible, "to let them have a military record." These activities continued and in course of time a definite issue emerged.

One autumn day a messenger came hot-foot to Fort Garry bearing the following letter: —

Factor W. H. Watt to the Honourable D. A. Smith, M.P.

PEMBINA, 5th October, 1871.

DEAR SIR: —

This place was this morning at 7.30 taken possession of by O'Donohue, O'Neill, Donelly, and Curley, who had thirty-five men along as followers. They were driven out by General Wheaton, of the United States Army. He captured O'Neill, Donelly and Curley with ten of their men, also all their ammunition and arms; at least what they did not carry off with them. O'Donohue left his cloak and overcoat, and since his flight from the fort has been captured by some of the half-breeds on this side of the line. He has not been taken here, but one of them has gone to General Wheaton to see if he will take him for security. If he does not take him, I will try and get the half-breeds to take him to Fort Garry. The French half-breeds of Pembina deserve credit for their prompt action in

the affair. Send us help and we will get enough together to make a good fight.

My life is said to be in danger because I tried to lock the door on O'Donohue when I saw the troops close.

In great haste,

Yours obediently,

W. H. WATT.

The tidings being conveyed by Mr. Smith to the authorities, Governor Archibald resolved to make an appeal to the half-breeds to unite against the invaders. Unfortunately he was faced by an awkward situation. Warrants for the arrest of the Métis leaders, on a charge of complicity in the murder of Thomas Scott, were in the hands of the local police. How could Riel and the rest be expected to appear at Fort Garry to defend it, who might have to remain there to defend themselves from justice? Père Ritchot propounded this query to the Governor in a note, to which he received the following reply: —

Governor Archibald to Père Ritchot

GOVERNMENT HOUSE, October 5th, 1871.

REVEREND SIR: —

Your note has just reached me. You speak of the difficulties which might impede any action of Mr. Riel, in coming forward to use his influence with his fellow-citizens, to rally to the support of the Province in this present emergency.

Should Mr. Riel come forward, as suggested, he need be under no apprehension that his liberty shall

be interfered with in any way; to use your own language, *pour la circonstance actuelle.*

It is hardly necessary for me to add that the coöperation of the French half-breeds and their leaders in support of the Crown, under present circumstances, will be very welcome, and cannot be looked upon otherwise than as entitling them to most favourable consideration.

Let me add that in giving you this assurance with promptitude, I feel myself entitled to be met in the same spirit.

The sooner the French half-breeds assume the attitude in question, the more graceful will be their action, and the more favourable their influence.

I have the honour to be, Reverend Sir,

Yours truly,

A. G. Archibald,

Lieutenant-Governor.

The clergy assisted the Governor and Chief Commissioner Smith in the work of pacification. The colleagues of O'Donohue in the Provisional Government, on whom he had counted, began to come out against him. At last Riel, now eager to obtain an amnesty, went into the French settlements and used his influence against O'Donohue. At the time Governor Archibald wrote:—

O'Donohue was always a Fenian, an annexationist; Riel was neither. His feelings were those of a Frenchman and a Catholic. He could see a chance for his race and creed in the Dominion, where a large part of the population is French. The clergy, who were of the same race, naturally shared his feelings in this respect,

and they felt more inclined to side with Riel, one of themselves, than with O'Donohue, who differed from them in race, and as a Fenian, was not necessarily a good Catholic.

With these influences operating on the French side, their sullenness and resentment were gradually overcome, and they were brought to take a stand in favour of the Crown.

The Governor reviewed the troops which had been collected under the command of Riel, Lépine, and their companions, thereby accepting their services. He promised them at least a temporary immunity from molestation on account of the crime of which they were accused; he shook hands with them; he received a letter signed by them; and through his secretary, he addressed to them an official reply, complimenting them on the loyalty which they had shown and the assistance which they had rendered. He convinced himself — though Sir John Macdonald afterwards had misgivings on this point — that this exhibition of fidelity was genuine and *bonâ fide*, and that it largely contributed to the preservation of Her Majesty's Dominions from insult and invasion. In short, he was satisfied, to use his own language, that "if the Dominion has, at this moment, a province to defend, and not one to conquer, we owe it to the policy of forbearance. If I had driven the French half-breeds into the hands of the enemy, O'Donohue would have been joined by all the population between the Assiniboine and the frontier, Fort Garry would have passed into the hands of an armed mob, and

the English settlers to the north of the Assiniboine would have suffered horrors it makes me shudder to contemplate."[1]

From Chief Factor Hamilton to a Fellow-Officer

NORWAY HOUSE, November 2, 1871.

You will have heard all about the Fenian excitement at Red River. It looked rather serious at one time and I thought we would have had some sharp work. Thanks, however, to the prompt measures taken by Colonel Wheaton, of the American garrison stationed at Pembina, the whole affair was nipped in the bud. I must say that the English-speaking portion of the population responded admirably to the Governor's call to arms. The loyal French also behaved well, but the Provisional gentry kept pretty well aloof till they saw that we could do without them, and then they came forward and made a great demonstration of loyalty. Messrs. Christie, McMurray, Clarke, and myself went as far as Pembina, but arrived too late for any of the fun; in fact, the only man who had an opportunity of distinguishing himself was our friend, William Watt, who seized O'Donohue by the throat and tried to make him prisoner, but the Fenian scoundrel was too much for poor Watt with his one arm.

[1] Lord Dufferin afterwards observed: "After the governor of a province has put arms into the hands of a subject and has invited him to risk his life, with a full knowledge at the time that the individual in question was amenable to the law for crimes previously committed, the executive is no longer in a position to pursue the person thus dealt with as a felon. The acceptance of the service might be held, I imagine, to bar the prosecution of the offender; for undesirable as it may be that a great criminal should go unpunished, it would be still more pernicious that the government of the country spould show a want of fidelity to its engagements, or exhibit a narrow spirit in its interpretation of them."

Was Riel promised Pardon?

I was in court at Pembina during the time the prisoners were on trial and I must say I never saw such mockery of justice. It was the first Yankee court I ever was in, and I don't wish ever to see another. Colonel Wheaton was prosecuting attorney, and I must say did his utmost to get a conviction, but the Pembina people to a man were in favour of the ruffians and of course they were acquitted. I had the honour of an introduction to the great General O'Neill and found him a very jolly-looking fellow, with not much of the warrior in his appearance.

Ever since the day of Riel's inglorious flight there had arisen in a definite shape what had been for some months hovering about vaguely in the minds of those principally concerned, the vital question of amnesty. Had or had not an amnesty been privately and secretly granted the insurgents by the Government of the day? Had the promise been held out to them that, on condition of their laying down their arms and taking the oath of allegiance to Canada, their past offences, including the shooting of Scott, would be forgiven? Did Riel and the members of the Provisional Government so understand it?

It is easy enough now to unravel the skein of mystery and falsehood and misunderstanding. Unerringly can we lay a finger on the master-thread. But forty years ago the problem was baffling.

When the Queen's Proclamation was issued in December, 1869, it contemplated, of course, only the acts committed by the insurgents known at the time of its issue. Circumstances became altogether

changed when the death of Thomas Scott occurred. The granting of the amnesty in accordance with that Proclamation, without pardoning those concerned in the death of Scott, would not have satisfied the people who clamoured for an amnesty, and therefore would have been found useless in so far as the peace of the country and contentment of the people were concerned. But how could the murderers of Scott be pardoned?

Early in June, 1870, Bishop Taché made the promise, in the name of the Dominion Government, that *all* who participated in the rebellion would receive a full pardon, and then devoted many succeeding months of his life to explaining how he was led (or misled) into making so handsome an offer.

Lord Kimberley wrote to Sir John Young, 30th of June, 1870: —

> You express a hope that Her Majesty's Government will themselves pronounce on the question of amnesty. You suggest an amnesty for political offences, leaving the execution of Thomas Scott (which presents the only real obstacle to that course) open to investigation, and you forward a memorandum framed by Sir George Cartier, in which he expresses an opinion that an amnesty should be issued in such terms as in all probability would lead to the acquittal of those concerned in that execution.

Well might the British Government be embarrassed. For, after all, as Lord Granville suggested, it only possessed a "technical authority." Later Lord Kimberley wrote: —

Government shirks the Quest

Lord Kimberley to Sir John Young

DOWNING STREET, 11th August, 1870.

Confidential.

SIR:—I have received your confidential despatch of the 26th ultimo, enclosing a memorandum by Sir George Cartier on Lord Granville's despatch of June 30th on the subject of granting an amnesty to persons concerned in the Red River disturbances.

I have read Sir George Cartier's observations with the attention they deserve, but Her Majesty's Government cannot act in so grave a matter upon the authority of any individual member of the Canadian Government, however eminent.

If your Ministers should resolve that this is a question which they cannot undertake to decide, and that they must refer its decision to the Imperial Government, this resolution must be obeyed through you as the opinion of the Government of the Dominion, and Her Majesty's Government must distinctly be requested to assume the responsibility of dealing with the question. I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

KIMBERLEY.

We may gather what the policy of the Macdonald Government was, from the admissions of Mr. (afterwards Sir) Hector Langevin at the subsequent public inquiry. It was to shirk the question of amnesty as long as possible, by alleging that it was out of their power to grant such and to throw the *onus* on the Imperial Government. To the restive ones amongst his colleagues, like Langevin and

Robitaille, Sir John said he intended to go to England after the session. He "intends to represent to the Imperial authorities that this North-West Question is an Imperial one which is causing trouble and disquietude in a portion of the Dominion; and that certainly the best interests of the Empire require that the Imperial Government should take the matter up. The Imperial Government will certainly feel it their duty to act in the matter, and therefore the question will come to an early solution."

Thus the Ministry temporized, and Sir John's illness supervening, the matter dragged along.

It was a matter with which we had nothing to do as a Government, as it had occurred previous to the country coming into our hands; and therefore it was a matter that should be dealt with by the Imperial authorities and not by us.

In every conversation I had with Archbishop Taché, he always stated to me that Sir George Cartier and Sir John Macdonald, when they received, on behalf of the Canadian Government, the delegates from the people of the North-West had promised an amnesty; but on enquiry of my colleagues, Sir George Cartier and Sir John Macdonald, I must say that they always told me that no such promise was made.[1]

Even after the death of Thomas Scott, it is clear that Sir John Macdonald and several members of the Ministry believed that an amnesty was desirable, but, the temper of the country being what it was, politically inadvisable. So they clandestinely

[1] Sir Hector Langevin's evidence, *The Amnesty Report*, 1874.

dangled the idea before the malcontents and permitted Archbishop Taché to believe that it was their intention to grant a pardon to Riel and his associates, while publicly they shrank from so generous and so fatal a measure. How to continue to sail evenly between Scylla and Charybdis? How successfully assuage the discontent of both factions? Sir John Macdonald, the "all-contriving," attempted the task.

It was said that it was "most desirable" that these things should be settled, that there should be an amnesty. I heard these statements frequently in conversation, both from Sir George Cartier and Sir John Macdonald; in fact, they were always made a subject of conversation whenever I was in Ottawa. I said that it was most unjust that this state of affairs should continue. They agreed with this view, but never said that they would obtain an amnesty. In a conversation with Sir John Macdonald about 23d of October, I submitted this to him. I told him that Archbishop Taché had informed me that an amnesty had been promised. He said no such promise had been given, and that he had letters from Lord Lisgar or Sir Clinton Murdock denying any promise on their part. He said, however, that when he was in England he would see about it.[1]

Events rendered action of some sort necessary.

At the opening of Parliament in October, 1871, Mr. Langevin had two interviews with a large number of his supporters from the Province of Quebec. After exchanging their views and discussing the

[1] Statement of the Honourable Donald A. Smith, *The Amnesty Report*, 1874. Mgr. Taché was created Archbishop in 1871.

matter, Langevin declared that if the amnesty were not granted within a reasonable time after the session of Parliament, he would resign his seat as a member of the Government and that his colleague, the Honourable Mr. Robitaille, would do the same. He had always thought that, in order to give peace and contentment to the North-West, a full amnesty was required; and that a full amnesty was highly impracticable as long as the excitement about the death of Thomas Scott was kept up. Wherefore, in order to allay this feeling, he had induced one or two of the most influential friends of Riel to use their influence with him to prevent his coming to Ottawa and taking his seat.

In the Manitoba legislature, on February 5, 1872, the following Resolution was moved by the Honourable Donald Smith and carried unanimously: —

That whereas, during the period intervening between the passing of the Dominion Act and the Temporary Government of Rupert's Land and the North-West Territories, when the same should be united to Canada, and the date when the union actually took place, very serious troubles occurred in the country now known as the Province of Manitoba; and whereas, Her Majesty's Government is the only authority competent to deal with this grave question; and whereas, in the interests of peace and good order, it is not only desirable but requisite that steps should be taken to settle and set at rest all questions connected with such troubles:

Resolved, therefore, That an humble address be presented to Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen praying that Her Majesty would be pleased to com-

mand that this House be made acquainted with the action already taken, or which it may be Her Majesty's Royal pleasure to take, with a view of satisfying justice and the best interests of this country.

On the following day, Mr. Smith was requested, by messenger from Governor Archibald, to call on him at his house on urgent business. He went and found the Governor and Archbishop Taché together. Governor Archibald informed him that there was danger of a rising of the Métis. There had been a meeting and they had resolved to arm. The country was in a most dangerous condition. He said that he and the Archbishop had been talking the matter over, and that they had decided, at the desire and with the consent of the Dominion Government, to get some of the leading parties out of the way. Information had reached Fort Garry that there had been a reward offered by the Ontario Government for the apprehension of Riel and others. They said that they had no money in the treasury of Manitoba, and Mr. Smith was asked if he could and would advance six hundred pounds sterling, it being distinctly understood between them that it would be "made good" by the Dominion Government. The money was to be paid by Mr. Smith to Archbishop Taché, Lieutenant-Governor Archibald saying that he would take upon himself the responsibility that the money should be repaid by the Dominion Government. Mr. Smith promptly agreed: he signed an order for the money, also agreeing that, in event of repudiation, he would patriotically share the loss.

The money so procured was given to Riel and Lépine to leave the country, where their presence was dangerous. It was mentioned that they were to promise to remain away for a year, and should not, under any circumstances, return until after the elections. As Mr. Smith was bound for Ottawa in a few days, Governor Archibald requested him to inform the Dominion Government of the transaction. On his arrival, therefore, he spoke of it to Mr. Langevin and Sir George Cartier, as well as to the Prime Minister.

Now, how did Sir John Macdonald view this arrangement? He already knew and approved of the previous expenditure of five hundred pounds for distribution amongst the half-breeds who had given him their assistance at a critical moment in January, 1869, and for which they were afterwards imprisoned by Riel, and had promised the repayment of this sum. Here are Sir John's own words, describing his interview with Mr. Smith in February, 1872:—

He [Donald A. Smith] told me that Governor Archibald and himself and Bishop Taché had been apprehensive of an immediate outbreak of the Métis; that Governor Archibald had strongly expressed the opinion that the safety of the country depended on Riel's withdrawal from the country, and that his absence must be procured at all hazards; that the Lieutenant-Governor had no money at his disposal, but that if Mr. Smith would advance the necessary sum, he had no doubt that the Dominion Government would repay it, and mentioned, as a proof of the strength of Mr.

Archibald's feelings, that there was imminent danger, and that the money must be expended; that Mr. Archibald said, "if the Government repudiate the debt, I will pay half, if you run the risk of the other half," or something of that kind. Mr. Smith stated that he had advanced six hundred pounds sterling in consequence of this request, either to Mr. Archibald to be given to Bishop Taché, or to Bishop Taché himself; I do not remember which.

The largeness of the sum rather staggered me, especially as I had not heard the result of the previous payment; but I did not hesitate to at once tell Mr. Smith that if the Lieutenant-Governor, in the presence of such an exigency, had pledged the faith of the Dominion Government, and the money was advanced on that pledge, that he, Mr. Smith, or the Company, should not be the losers, and should be repaid. I stated that there might be a difficulty as to the means or fund out of which he would be repaid; that it would be very embarrassing, if not impossible, to go to Parliament at the time for the money, and I asked him to allow the matter to stand over, repeating the assurance for myself that it must be repaid him in some way or other.

I was exceedingly unwilling to bring up the discussion of the Riel affair at all, in consequence of the embarrassment I felt as to the position of my Lower Canadian colleagues. I was anxious to avoid discussion lest the result might be a claim for amnesty, and, in the event of the Cabinet not agreeing upon action, resignation. The consideration of the payment was therefore postponed, as I thought it made little difference to a Company like the Hudson's Bay Company.[1]

In the autumn, Governor Archibald came to

[1] Amnesty Committee's *Report.*

Ottawa, and told Mr. Smith that it had been arranged by the Government that either the six hundred or five hundred pounds advanced to the Government should be paid. Sir John, however, said it would not be convenient to have the debt paid until after the session of Parliament. All the discussions were in the same sense; such discussions and assurances were repeated also in the spring session of Parliament in 1873.

It was manifest enough that the Prime Minister wished all danger past before running the risk of possible disclosure to his political enemies. As Sir Richard Cartwright puts it in his *Reminiscences:* —

> Had they known of his correspondence with Mr. Donald Smith and Archbishop Taché in reference to Riel, he would not have had a corporal's guard at his back from Ontario.

Thus time drifted on. The summer of 1873 came and with it a blow to the fortunes of the party in power, — so sudden and so crushing that the party did not recover for years. The nature of that disaster I will now proceed to relate.

CHAPTER XIV

THE "PACIFIC RAILWAY SCANDAL"

1871–1873

DURING these absorbing and harassing events one question vital to the future of this Dominion had not been neglected.

The best way, declared Sir John Macdonald, to preserve the North-West Territories to the Dominion was to construct a railway to the Pacific. While, therefore, the Premier was absent in Washington attending the Joint High Commission, on April 11, 1871, Sir George Cartier moved a resolution in the Dominion House of Commons that a Pacific railway be constructed by private enterprise and that it be given liberal subsidies of land and money; the land grants to be alternate blocks, twenty miles deep, along the line and the money subscription $30,000,000. Sir Alexander Galt supported Cartier's motion and it was carried.

The leading spirit of one particular company which sought to obtain the benefits of this Pacific Railway Charter and grants was Senator David L. MacPherson, a member of a contracting firm which had constructed the Grand Trunk Railway west of Toronto, and a large owner of the stock of one of that railway's chief subsidiary lines.[1]

[1] The Grand Trunk Railway was controlled by an English board of directors headed by Thomas Baring, Lord Wolverton, and others, and by a Canadian board consisting of Messrs. C. J. Brydges, James

It was felt by the promoters and directors of the Grand Trunk Railway that they had a prior claim to construct and control the great Pacific Railway which had now taken hold of the popular imagination. But it was little likely that such a prize would fail to attract the growing band of Canadian capitalists who had their headquarters at Montreal. Between the soul of this group, Sir Hugh Allan, and Mr. Smith, commercial relations had subsisted for some years.

Beginning his career as a merchant in a small way, Allan had developed into a prosperous contractor and shipowner. He figured in most of the leading commercial industrial enterprises of his time. Many years before, he had founded the Montreal Steamship Company, which subsequently became the Allan Line of steamers plying between Liverpool and the St. Lawrence. He was president of the Merchants' Bank, which had been chartered in 1864, and was president, or vice-president, of no fewer than twenty corporations, comprising telegraph, navigation, coal and iron, tobacco, cotton manufacture, rolling mills, paper mills, sewing machines, elevator, and other concerns in which Mr. Smith had a growing interest. He was the first president of the Quebec, Montreal, Ottawa & Occidental Railroad, which had developed out of the Northern Colonization Railroad, the titles of both of which are reminiscent of the time.

Ferrier, and William Molson. Cartier had been solicitor for the Grand Trunk Railway, and Sir A. Galt a leading promoter of that railway.

Sir Hugh Allan's Project

Associated with Sir Hugh Allan in his Canadian Pacific Railway scheme were a group of American capitalists, Messrs. George W. McMullen, W. B. Ogden, George W. Case, W. G. Fargo, the banking firm of Winslow, Lanier & Company, Jay Cooke, and others.

Some of these American capitalists, such as Fargo, were heads of express companies; others were railway promoters or officials. One, for instance, controlled the Pennsylvania Railroad, and became chief promoter of the notorious Texas Pacific project, and was charged in this connection, in 1876, with a wide corruption of Congress. This was the classic era of aggressive railway capitalists in America. Another group was headed by Collis P. Huntington, the Central and Southern Pacific railway magnate. Two groups, furiously contesting for the division of land grants and subsidies in the Southwestern States, set the pace and the example for lesser corporations.

Sir Hugh Allan had been made aware by Mr. Smith, amongst others, of the enormous possibilities of the Canadian North-West and the potential value of the lands in the territory through which the projected railway would run. He was not in this instance swayed by any consideration of public welfare, but merely saw the opportunity of acquiring for himself and his associates a vast fortune out of Government subsidies and the eventual sale of the lands. In a word, he sought to repeat in Canada the plan and the methods which had been adopted by American capitalists with great success in the

building of their railways. Nor did he shrink from the immediate adoption of those preliminaries of political intrigue and bribery which had grown to be almost a fixed rule of railway building in the adjoining Republic.

Early in the negotiations Allan shrewdly recognized that the presence of so large an alien element in the composition of his Canadian Pacific syndicate was a fatal drawback. The more he reflected on the magnitude of the undertaking and the vast prizes it offered, the more he perceived the soundness of the policy of amalgamating the interests of the Grand Trunk Railway, which after all was a purely British organization, with his own. Moreover, the Grand Trunk Railway had for its champion no less a personage than Sir George Étienne Cartier, who had been solicitor of that Company.

"Cartier," wrote Allan to one of his associates, "was naturally desirous of giving the contract for the Canadian Pacific Railway into the hands of parties connected with the Grand Trunk Railway, and to this end he fanned the flame of opposition to us." He added the pregnant fact that Cartier, the leader and chief of the French Party, actually controlled forty-five members of Parliament, who were wont to vote in a solid phalanx for all his measures. Seeing that the normal Government majority was frequently less than forty-five, it was important to win over this compact body of Cartier's followers. Allan directed how measures must be taken to that end.

There was still another independent opposing

group which would have to be disposed of. "The party in the interest of the Hudson's Bay Company," wrote Sir Hugh Allan to his associate, McMullen, on December 29, 1871, "consisting of Donald A. Smith, D. McInnes, G. Laidlaw, G. Stephen, Daniel Torrence (of New York), and one or two others have given notice, in the *Official Gazette*, that they will apply for a charter to make a railroad from Pembina to Fort Garry. That is the only one that affects us."

Concerning this, we have Mr. Smith's words: "In 1871, I, in company with several other gentlemen in Canada, joined in obtaining a charter for a line from Pembina to Fort Garry and thence west, but the Dominion Government had been afraid that this line or lines would interfere with the proposed Pacific system." [1]

On January 24, 1872, Allan wrote to Charles M. Smith, of Chicago, and McMullen that his (Allan's) subscription of $1,450,000 to the stock of the proposed Canadian Pacific Railway Company "includes the sum of $200,000 furnished jointly by you and myself, to be transferred in whole or in part to Mr. C. J. Brydges on condition of his joining the organization and giving it the benefit of his assistance and influence."

But Brydges was not to be won over so easily. In February, Allan wrote to C. M. Smith:—

Since writing to you yesterday, I have seen Mr. D. L. MacPherson, of Toronto, who is a member of the

[1] *Parliamentary Debates*, September, 1878.

Dominion Senate, and rather an important person to gain over to our side. He has been applied to by our opponents, and uses that as a lever by which to obtain better terms from us. He insists on getting $250,000 of stock, and threatens opposition if he does not get it. You will remember, he is one of those I proposed as directors. I will do the best I can, but I think that McMullen, you, and myself will have to give up some of our stock to conciliate these parties.

Four days later, Allan wrote again to Charles M. Smith: —

It seems pretty certain that in addition to money payments the following stock will have to be distributed: D. L. MacPherson, $100,000; A. B. Foster, $100,000; Donald A. Smith, $100,000; J. J. C. Abbott, $50,000; John Shedden, $50,000; A. Allan, $50,000; C. S. Gzowski, $50,000; George Brown, $50,000; A. S. Hincks, $50,000; N. Nathan, $50,000; T. McGreevy, $50,000; total, $850,000.[1] Please say if this is agreeable to you? I do not think we can do with less, and may have to give more. I do not think we will require more than $100,000 in cash, but I am not sure yet. Who am I to draw on for money when it is wanted, and what proof of payment will be required? You are aware I cannot get receipts. Our Legislature meets on the 11th of April, and I am already deep in preparation for the game. Every day brings up some new difficulty to be encountered, but I hope to meet them all successfully. Write to me immediately.

P.S. I think you will have to *go it blind* in the matter of money-cash payments. I have already paid $8500, and have not a voucher and cannot get one.

[1] The total was really $700,000. But Allan appears here a rather reckless juggler with figures.

Than this letter could cynicism and corrupt intention further go?

It need hardly be said that in thus apportioning the sum of $100,000 to Mr. Donald A. Smith, Sir Hugh Allan had acted entirely without the latter's knowledge and consent, and the same is doubtless true of several of the other persons whose names were thus referred to.

Hon. D. A. Smith to Lord Iddesleigh

Fort Garry, October, 1873.

Any one is at liberty, I suppose, to put down any one else's name for a sum of money in a memorandum, a last will and testament, or any other document; but if any inference can be drawn from this mention of mine in a letter of Sir Hugh Allan, I have only to say that I never heard of it; that had I heard I would have scorned such a proposal, and that the last thing in the world I would have dreamt of doing would be to accept a penny's-worth of stock, without an open and avowed equivalent, from Sir Hugh Allan or any one else.

On one point, too, Sir George Cartier had made his views clear: —

Aussi longtemps que je vivrai et que je serai dans le Ministère, jamais une sacrée compagnie Américaine aura le contrôle du Pacifique, et je résignerai ma place de Ministre plûtot que d'y consentir.[1]

On July 1, Allan wrote to Mr. J. S. Kennedy, an American capitalist in New York, that the cry,

[1] "As long as I live and am in the Ministry, never shall a d——d American Company have control of the Pacific, and I will resign my place as Minister rather than consent to it."

"No Yankee dictation," had forced upon him the ostensible dropping of every American name from the Canadian Pacific Railway scheme.

Still Cartier's opposition threatened trouble. Allan's retort was to carry the war into the enemy's country. In his own words, surely matchless for their audacity and indiscretion, he

found that means must be taken to influence the public, and I employed several young French writers to write it up in their own newspapers. I subscribed a controlling influence in the stock and proceeded to subsidize the newspapers themselves, both editors and proprietors. I went to the country through which the road would pass, and called on many inhabitants. I visited the priests and made friends of them, and I employed agents to go among the principal people and talk it up. I then began to hold public meetings, and attended to them myself, making frequent speeches in French to them, showing them where their true interest lay. The scheme at once became popular. I formed a committee to influence the members of the Legislature. This succeeded so well that, in a short time, I had 27 out of 45 on whom I could rely, and the electors of the ward in this city, which Cartier himself represents, notified him that unless the contract for the Pacific Railway was given in the interests of Lower Canada, he need not present himself for reëlection. He did not believe this, but when he came here and met his constituents, he found, to his surprise, that their determination was unchanged. He then agreed to give the contract as required.

At last it would appear that Sir Hugh Allan's methods were influencing Cartier, for we find that

statesman writing a "private and confidential" letter to Allan, July 30, 1872: —

The friends of the Government will expect to be assisted with funds in the pending elections, and any amount which you or your Company shall advance for that purpose shall be recouped to you. A memorandum of the immediate requirements is below.

This memorandum read: —

	Now wanted
Sir John A. Macdonald	$ 25,000
Hon. Mr. Langevin	15,000
Sir G. E. C.	20,000
Sir J. A. (add.)	10,000
Hon. Mr. Langevin	100,000
Sir G. E. C.	30,000

On August 7, 1872, Allan wrote: —

I have already paid away about $250,000, and will have to pay at least $50,000 before the end of the month. I don't even know as that will finish it, but hope so.

The scheme being promoted by Sir Hugh Allan had now reached the point when it was considered that the Government support was secure. There remained the necessity of attempting to unify the competing companies. On October 15, 1872, a provisional board of directors for the Canadian Pacific Railway Company were Senators A. B. Foster, John Hamilton, David Christie, and James Skead. The Honourable Donald A. Smith, representing a Manitoba constituency in the Dominion Parliament, was named a member of the provisional board of directors of the Canadian Pacific Railway. So,

too, were the Honourable J. J. Ross, M.P. and Legislative Councillor; the Honourable Chief Judge Coursel, of Montreal; Henry Nathan, M.P. for Victoria, B.C.; Andrew Allan, brother of Sir Hugh; the Honourable Louis Archambault, M.P., and Dominion Minister of Agriculture, and sundry other members of Parliament.

Formidable as was this combination of men of political and other influences, the scheme failed. For the Interoceanic Railway Company refused to amalgamate, and Allan was driven to the necessity of organizing an entirely new company.

So long as the two chief competing companies failed to come to terms of amalgamation, neither could command financial support from the Dominion Government. The formation of a new company by Sir Hugh Allan settled the difficulty. On February 5, 1873, the charter of this company was signed by the Governor-General. By its provisions the Canadian Pacific Railway Company pledged itself to build the railway within ten years from July 20, 1871, in consideration of which it was to receive a land grant of 50,000,000 acres, and a subsidy of $30,000,000, payable from time to time in installments. The company was allowed a capital of $10,000,000.[1]

Duly the session of Parliament opened. On the second of April the famous bombshell was exploded.

[1] It was proposed that the construction contract was to be given to the Canada Land and Improvement Company. This contract was signed by Sir Hugh Allan, Donald A. Smith, George W. McMullen, Jay Cooke & Company, Thomas A. Scott, and others. The total capital was $5,725,000.

A Dramatic Exposure

Lucius S. Huntingdon, M.P., rose in his place in the House of Commons and in effect accused Sir John A. Macdonald and the Government of having sold the charter of the Canadian Pacific Railway for a large sum of money to be used for election purposes. He closed a dramatic speech by demanding an investigating committee.

At first Sir John Macdonald refused to appoint such a committee; he eventually regarded it as expedient to do so. In this case the *personnel* was selected by the House of Commons itself. In the midst of its sessions a Montreal newspaper startled the community by publishing, at Huntingdon's instance, the confidential telegrams and letters written by Sir Hugh Allan to McMullen.

Sir Richard Cartwright wrote,[1] long afterwards:

> It has never been clearly explained how and why Sir John allowed these very compromising letters of Sir Hugh Allan to fall into his enemies' hands when he could apparently have got possession of them by paying a comparatively small sum of money. He may have thought the offer was a trap. I do not know, and the reason remains more or less of a mystery, the more so as Sir John showed in other ways that he was in a temper to stop at nothing if he could escape a hostile verdict.

Sir Hugh Allan was a man of strict business habits, never acting on a question which involved the expenditure of money without first having the transaction reduced to writing. There was nothing brought out in the evidence to show an actual sale of the charter of the Pacific Railway; there was not even a hint of such

[1] *Reminiscences.*

an act being done. A great railway was to be built. Canada had undertaken the enterprise. Sir Hugh was a capitalist of some influence and wealth. An ambitious and powerful man, and thirsting for more power still, he strove to identify himself with the great national work projected.

What came out clearly enough in the evidence was that the Chicago broker McMullen was a blackmailer of the deepest hue, and a man totally devoid of honour. When he had sufficiently wormed himself into Sir Hugh's confidence, he threatened to publish his truly ingenuous letters. After blackmailing Allan and selling him back his letters for a large price, McMullen straightway repaired to Sir Hugh Allan's enemies, and placed in their hands also for a good round sum, copies of the same letters and telegrams. His reason for betraying him was that he found that Allan's influence with the Government was not as potent as he had been led to suppose.

Howbeit, this fatal partnership had been dissolved some time before the railway charter was granted.[1]

Sir John A. Macdonald was called as a witness. In his evidence he frankly admitted that he had re-

[1] "The latter [McMullen] had been playing a deep game all the while, and his crafty manipulation of the correspondence led the erstwhile shrewd Canadian capitalist to write a number of committal letters. These letters McMullen carefully copied for future use, and then, as if to show how utterly insincere he was, he openly boasted that he had Sir Hugh Allan in his power. There was no evidence to show that the large sums of money which Allan had advanced were furnished in consideration of his receiving the Pacific Railway charter." (Lord Dufferin, *Memorandum.*)

ceived funds from Allan for use for election purposes. The Dominion elections were coming on and he and Sir George Cartier had discussed the question of subscriptions to the Conservative Party's central fund at Toronto.

We spoke of several in Montreal who would be likely, from party attachment, or from interest, or from other moving cause, to aid us, and Sir Hugh's name was, of course, mentioned, as being the richest man in Canada, and the one most interested in procuring the return of members in favour of the large, I may say, the Imperial, policy which had characterized our administration. Aid had come to the fund from Montreal from several quarters, and I was not surprised to receive a communication from Sir Hugh Allan that he would contribute twenty-five thousand dollars to the Ontario fund.

As regards myself, I was made the medium through which the subscriptions were paid, but it might, had he so chosen, have been remitted through any other channel. I did not consider it at all an unusually large subscription from a man of his wealth. Others, with not a twentieth part of his means, subscribed from five to ten thousand dollars. I, however, of course, expected that Sir Hugh would feel himself called upon to contribute to the Quebec fund.

The Conservative Party in England does not repudiate the action of the brewers and distillers and the Association of Licensed Victuallers in electing candidates in their interests, and we did not repudiate or reject the influence of the railway interest. Our misfortune was that, by the base betrayal of those private communications, the names of certain members of the

Government, including myself, were mixed up in the obtaining of these subscriptions. Had this betrayal not taken place, it would have been only known that Sir Hugh Allan, and the railways with which he had been connected, had taken a decided line in supporting one party in preference to another, by their influence and money.

Sir John further testified that the Government had asked Donald A. Smith to be a member of the Canadian Pacific board. Smith was "the representative man of the Hudson's Bay Company in Canada" and the "Government thought it would be a great advantage to get the assistance and influence of that powerful corporation in England, if the Company had to go to that market to borrow . . . ." He went on, "When the Government came to the conclusion to exclude members of Parliament, Mr. Smith was excluded, and upon his own recommendation, Mr. McDermott, a wealthy merchant in Winnipeg, was appointed in Smith's place." [1]

Excitement on account of what was called the "Pacific Railway Scandal" ran high throughout the whole country. On October 24, Parliament was to meet. The situation was so critical that every member of the party, every supporter of Sir John

[1] "As Sir Donald Smith cannot be on the board, being an M.P., I think it would be well to put Sir Stafford Northcote on, if he will act. I have asked Smith to write Northcote to that effect. The New Brunswickers have selected Mr. Burpee, a civil engineer, and brother of the member for St. John, as their representative. Tupper is now at Halifax, and will select his men for Nova Scotia. I scarcely know whom to choose for British Columbia. Cornwall, as a Senator, is not eligible. However, we will put on some man as a *locum tenens* for the present." (Macdonald to Cartier.)

was expected to rally to the division. During the early part of October, Mr. Smith was in the Far West, visiting certain establishments of the Company of which he was Chief Commissioner. At Fort Carlton a letter from Sir John reached him, announcing the date of Parliament's meeting, and stating that he relied especially upon Mr. Smith's being in his place to support him. "Upon you and the influence you can bring to bear," wrote Sir John, "may depend the fate of the Administration."

On receipt of this urgent message the Chief Commissioner made a record journey from Fort Carlton to Winnipeg, whence he telegraphed to Sir John that he would be in Ottawa by the 23d of October. During the latter part of his journey, Mr. Smith had ample leisure to peruse the evidence before the Pacific Railway Commission as given in the Toronto newspapers.

On arrival at the Capital on the eve of what was destined to be a memorable session, the member for Selkirk received a message from the Prime Minister, desiring to see him in one of the committee rooms. He went at once and found Sir John, who was in rather an excited state. He was, he said, delighted to see him and grateful for his having made such an effort to be there. He then said,—

"This is altogether a wretched business, Mr. Smith. Naturally the Opposition are going to make the most of it. We are being made the scape-goats of Allan and that scoundrel McMullen."

Mr. Smith answered that it was indeed a grave juncture. He had come up at the Premier's request

and would loyally await his statement to the House. If that statement proved to be, as he hoped, satisfactory, none of Sir John's supporters would vote for him more cheerfully than he. But it was essential that public and not private opinion must be considered.[1] Sir John then said, "If my friends here do not support me now, I will appeal to the country, and I am as sure as I stand here that Ontario will support me to a man." He repeated this several times.

Before this interview between Mr. Smith and the Premier concluded, the subject of Riel and Lépine and the money advanced by Mr. Smith to keep them out of the country was mentioned. Sir John said, "You will be up here next week, and we shall have it settled." Mr. Smith expressed himself as in no haste to receive the money. Nevertheless,

[1] "It is the basis of all free government that the acts of the Administration should be judged by the representatives of the people. In this case the same rule, it must be conceded, should apply. It is a well-known principle that the people have a right to judge, not only of the honesty of those entrusted with the management of their affairs, but even of their judgment in action. The people have a right to say they have erred in judgment. How are we to deal with or decide this question, on whether the Government have accepted the best offer? It is impossible for the country to say, we have only the word of the Government. I am quite disposed to take the word of the Government as an individual, but not as a member of the House. As representatives of the people, I think every one of us has a right to say the acts of the Government should be done in broad daylight, so that every elector may have an opportunity of judging whether or not the Government and every individual member was right not only in motive but in judgment. This is the reason of the motion, and I think it will be the duty of every member to affirm its principle, that nothing should be concealed from the representatives of the people." (Mr. Wilfrid Laurier, M.P., *Parliamentary Debates.*)

he could not conceal from himself that there were certain eventualities in prospect which might make restitution on the part of the Government difficult and perhaps impossible.

On the day following, the House met. In reply to the Speech from the Throne, Mr. Mackenzie moved the following amendment:—

> And we have to acquaint His Excellency that by their course in reference to the investigation of the charges preferred by Mr. Huntingdon, in his place in this House, and under the facts disclosed in the evidence laid before us, His Excellency's advisers have merited the severe censure of this House.

Mr. Mackenzie, in moving the amendment, reviewed the whole case in a moderate speech. Mr. James Macdonald, Conservative member for Pictou, moved, as an amendment to the amendment:

> And we desire to assure His Excellency that after consideration of the statement made in the evidence before us, and while we regret the outlay of money by all political parties at Parliamentary elections, and desire the most stringent measures to put an end to the practice, we at the same time beg leave to express our continued confidence in His Excellency's advisers, and in their administration of public affairs.

Days of heated argument ensued. Long before the division came, both Sir John Macdonald and Mr. Tupper had reason to know how the members regarded the action of the Government. Five years afterwards, Mr. Smith told a House wrought to a high pitch of excitement: —

Members of the late Government approached me before the eventful 4th of November, and wished to sound me and know how I was going to vote in this matter. Some days in advance of that time, I was requested to meet the honourable member for Charlevoix in the Speaker's room, and did meet him there. An honourable member from the other House, the Honourable Mr. Campbell, a gentleman for whom I have a very high respect personally, also met me there, and to both these gentlemen, during a long interview, at which was present also another gentleman who was then likewise a member of this House, — Mr. Nathan, a personal friend of mine, — I declared that I could not vote for the amendment to the amendment that was offered by Mr. Macdonald of Pictou.

I said: "No, *I cannot do so; I cannot possibly do so; I cannot conscientiously do so.*"

On the occasion referred to in the Speaker's chamber, I said that I could not support the Government, but I offered and proposed that there should be another amendment, and a very different one. The Government should frankly confess their fault to the House, and then, if the country condoned it, it would be a very different thing. That is what I proposed to the honourable gentleman, and it was reduced to writing at the time.

Yet, after this, Sir John Macdonald and his colleagues still professed to believe that Mr. Smith's vote was uncertain and that it might yet be cast in their favour. A distinguished Liberal member of Parliament who was present on the memorable day has left on record a spirited account of the intervention of the member for Selkirk: —

The "Old Fox" trapped

On the seventh day of the battle, Mr. Donald A. Smith, of Manitoba, took the floor. He had preserved, during the whole exciting debate, a sphinxlike silence. He was known as a staunch supporter of the Government, and his silence was construed into loyalty to his chief. He assured the House he had but little to say, and all waited anxiously, both sides apparently equally intent upon hearing that little. His opening remarks were complimentary to Sir John and his great service to Canada, and with that the faces of the Opposition lengthened.

But Mr. Smith had not finished. "With respect to the transaction between the Government and Sir Hugh Allan he did not consider that the First Minister took the money with any corrupt motive. He felt that the leader of the Government was incapable of taking money from Sir Hugh Allan for corrupt purposes." And now we thought we were done for. But wait a moment. "He would be most willing to vote confidence in the Government [loud cheers from the Government side] could he do so conscientiously" [great Opposition cheers].

"*Conscientiously*" — it was a bolt from the blue to the Government side of the House. To the Opposition it was a song of deliverance, and we all concluded that a Scottish conscience was a good thing to keep on hand.

It was great news for Number Nine — "We will catch the Old Fox[1] yet," said Rymal. He was caught. Donald Smith was used to trapping foxes in Labrador and the North-West — his speech did the trick.[2]

[1] Sir John Macdonald.

[2] The Honourable Sir George Ross, *Getting into Parliament and After*.

A few months later Mr. Smith stated to one of his chief supporters in Winnipeg: —

For two days and nights I struggled with myself over the course I should take. On the one hand were my admiration for Sir John Macdonald, my grateful sense of his services to the country, my confidence in his ability and statesmanship. On the other hand was a clear perception of the terrible political mistake which had been committed and the evil effect which it might have on the community. But the chief reflection which led me to vote as I did was that I had been sent into Parliament to represent my constituents, and I soon had ample reason to know how they regarded the affair. I had therefore only one course to take; it was a severe wrench to my personal feelings, but I took that course, let the cost be what it might.[1]

In that very debate he had said: —

He felt that the Leader of the Government was incapable of taking money from Allan for corrupt purposes. He would be most willing to vote for the amendment could he do so conscientiously. It was with very great regret that he felt he could not do so. . . . To take money from an expectant contractor was a very grave impropriety. For the honour of the country, no Government should exist that has a shadow of a suspicion of this kind resting upon them, and for that reason he could not vote for the amendment of the member for Pictou.[2]

After the vote the Prime Minister and Mr. Smith met in a committee room. Sir John checked the other's attempt to speak by saying, "You must

[1] *Memorandum* for Mr. Buckingham.
[2] Report of debate, *Toronto Globe*, November 5, 1873.

be repaid that loan." Mr. Smith said that it was now of no consequence to him. To continue in Mr. Smith's own words: —

He [Sir John] said that "the matter should have been arranged long ago, but it will be arranged now, if you will just merely, as a matter of course, write me a note stating (in order that we may have something to show) that it was paid to Archbishop Taché, at the instance of Governor Archibald, and you shall receive a cheque, or rather the money, to-morrow morning." I immediately wrote and posted the note required, mentioning the amount required, with interest, at 7 per cent,[1] from February, 1872. The note was in the terms Sir John had told me. I had not asked for the money in this conversation. This was the last conversation I had with Sir John about it in which he referred to giving this money. The payment of the money was spoken of by Dr. Tupper the next morning, and he said it would be repaid. And in conversation with Mr. Pope the same evening, he said that Sir John had said, in the previous week, that the money must be paid. The money has never been paid. I have had no conversation with any member of the late Government about it. I have stated to members of the present Government that the money should be paid, but I have made no claim for it, but I consider that Sir John should see it paid. The Dominion Government had an account with the Hudson's Bay Company, which acted as the Government bankers in the Territory. The money was not a transaction of my own; it was only in acting as the banker of the Government that the money was advanced, although if not paid by the Government, I

[1] This was then the current rate of interest in Winnipeg on loans made by the Company.

might consider I should make it good to the Company. I say this because I have not any written order or authority from Mr. Archibald for this payment. I did not consider that I was asked to advise upon the policy of these parties leaving the country, but simply to supply the necessary funds. I may mention here, that both Governor Archibald and Sir John expressed themselves strongly that faith had not been kept by Riel and Lépine in remaining away as they had promised.

This last is a reference to Riel's action, in contesting an election for Provencher in 1872, afterwards yielding to Sir George Cartier, who had suffered defeat in Quebec. Subsequently, on Cartier's lamented death, he was elected for that constituency and actually travelled to Ottawa, for the purpose of being sworn in as a member of the House of Commons. At this time he was a fugitive from justice. A true bill had been found against him, as one of the murderers of Thomas Scott, by the Grand Jury of Manitoba, and a price set upon his head. He succeeded in taking the oath, and in writing his name in the book, before the discovery of his presence in the city became known. In the hurry and confusion of the moment, he was allowed to slip away undetected. For days he remained in hiding in the capital. The exertions put forward by the officers can hardly have been very great, for Riel was frequently seen, and his presence in the capital was no secret. But it was felt undesirable to imprison the outlaw; neither the Government nor the Opposition seemed desirous of taking ac-

tion. Riel was accordingly permitted to escape. Mr. Mackenzie Bowell, M.P., an Orange Grand Master and boasting considerable local influence, moved in the House that Louis Riel be expelled from the House of Commons. The motion was carried, and though Riel was returned by acclamation by his constituency at a subsequent period, he was never allowed to take his seat in Parliament.

To the following letter from Mr. Archibald, now Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia, it is only necessary to add that eventually the Company was reimbursed for the sum advanced by its chief commissioner: —

A. G. Archibald to D. A. Smith

GOVERNMENT HOUSE, HALIFAX, N.S.,
20th November, 1873.

MY DEAR MR. SMITH: —

Your private letter of the 10th has enlightened me on several points on which I am ill-informed. I am *truly astonished* at one or two of the things you mention. After all that has taken place, I could hardly have believed it possible that two of the matters you refer to could have been left as they are. There can be no excuse for such neglect. Nobody knew better than Sir John, or admitted more unreservedly, the essential service rendered to the Government in the steps taken to get them rid of an excitement which would have been found to be beyond their control at the time, and when friends stepped into the gap and assumed risks, they should not have been left in that position an instant longer than was absolutely necessary. The matter should have been arranged at once, the more

so that it was so often pressed. The same may be said of the compensation to the loyal French, which, to my certain knowledge, was arranged for at the time I mentioned to you. I had assumed that both these matters had been disposed of long ago. It is really unpardonable.

If only the unfortunate cause of all these troubles had had the sense to see, as others saw for him, that the true solution of the question, both in his own interests and in the interest of his half-breed friends, and of the Dominion, was to keep himself in the background till the storm had blown over, all these difficulties would have vanished. Public attention would have been averted from him, and in the course of a few years the people would begin to think, if there had been an insurrection and a great crime, that it was a happy feature of a rebellion against English authority that it held its own for ten months, and had but one crime to charge itself with; that is, admitting that stealing a lot of your Hudson's Bay goods, and appropriating so much of other people's property as they found convenient, were not to be ranked under this category. There is no doubt that a very short time would have been needed to bring about a better state of feeling, and then he and his friends could have claimed an amnesty which, whether it was promised or not, was implied in the treaty, but which, whether it was promised or not, no Government could venture to give till the passions of the moment had cleared away a little and left them free to act in the true interest of the people of the Dominion.

I am, dear Mr. Smith,

Very sincerely yours,

ADAMS G. ARCHIBALD.

Not a Party Man

Thereafter, for several years the member for Selkirk stood forth an Independent in politics. But indeed his very temperament was opposed to his being a "party man."

While it was very true that a person entirely in accord with the Government has a readier access to the departments, at the same time, it is equally indisputable that a man thoroughly independent, looking to, and working for, the interests of his constituents, will be heard, and have influence no matter what Government was in power. In the past I have given an independent support to the administration of Sir John Macdonald, and, subsequently, to that of Mr. Mackenzie. I have felt it my duty to give these Governments a cordial support and assistance in bringing forward and maturing all measures in the true interest of the people of Manitoba and the North-West. I can say, very sincerely, that I have but one wish with regard to the people of Manitoba and the North-West, and that is to consult their interests. To perform this faithfully, it will be my duty to do the best I can for them with whatever administration is in power. Again, a member going from this place will have influence not only in the House of Commons, but in many other ways; and as associated with many others, I have been able in the past to do some good for the country, I trusted, with such assistance and connections, that I could be of use to this constituency and the Province at large in the future.[1]

As to his own position in the Selkirk constituency and Manitoba generally, it had gone on improving ever since his qualities had become known and

[1] Speech at Winnipeg, 1878.

esteemed. In September, 1871, the local newspaper, the *Manitoban*, took occasion to refer to the wonderful change which had taken place in public opinion relative to Mr. Smith.

Nineteen or twenty months ago, perhaps no man ever came before a constituency asking their suffrages under more unauspicious circumstances than did that gentleman. His opponents were unscrupulous — the old anti-Hudson's Bay Company cry was used to its utmost stretch — his efforts during the troubles were made use of to his disadvantage — every means was used to do him injustice — but he came through it all. He met his opponents face to face in public meetings — he demolished every accusation brought against him, and was elected.

But it is since the election that the most notable change has occurred. Those who were his most bitter political opponents before, are now his warmest friends, and perhaps there is no man in the Province to-day so thoroughly relied upon as Mr. Smith. His conduct in the local House last session proved him a man thoroughly capable of taking a lead in legislative action; his thorough, straightforward, and honest course in both houses has proved him a man to be trusted; and most people feel that the day is not far distant when Mr. Smith will be forced to take a much more prominent position politically in the Province than he occupies at present. In this case, therefore, we conceive there would have been little use in making a great cry and pother of the election of a gentleman, who by his sterling worth can do and has done so much for himself.

Address to Constituents

On another occasion this newspaper remarked:—

The people of Selkirk have shown, wherever their opinion has been challenged, that they are not only satisfied with Mr. Donald A. Smith, as their member, but anxious for his return. They are not quite neophytes in the selection of representatives, and they are likely to prefer a gentleman who has already worked well and advantageously for their interests, and whose position and standing here and in other parts of the Dominion assure attention to his demands and representations, to one who in the almost impossible event of his being elected would be known merely as "the gentleman from Selkirk."

In November, 1871, Mr. Smith as member for Selkirk, had had an opportunity of addressing his constituents for the first time since his election in the early spring. His reception was hearty, and when his conduct was called in question by a Mr. Mulvey, his rebuttal of the accusation made against him was convincing. The accusation amounted to this: That though he had pledged himself on the hustings to use every endeavour to obtain for the old Scotch and English settlers an interest in the land similar to that held by the half-breeds, he had failed to do so. Mr. Smith, in reply, and in the most emphatic terms, declared that in the House he rose and insisted that the Government should favourably consider the claims of the old settlers, and that Sir George Cartier had promised such consideration.

Early in the following summer it was announced that by the member for Selkirk's importunity an

appropriation of $5000 had been made for the improving of the navigation of Red River; and also that by his untiring efforts he had secured the rights and claims of the old settlers.

In the performance of his duties in the Legislative Assembly Mr. Smith was untiring. Measure after measure he introduced or supported for the good of the community. Of his introduction of the Amnesty Bill in 1871, a fellow-member, Mr. O'Donnell, declared: —

I listened with much pleasure to the sentiments which Mr. Donald Smith uttered in the Assembly this day. The silence with which the whole House listened to his words of eloquence showed that they carried conviction to every hearer, and he has shown us during the past few months that he has most enduring faith in British supremacy.

He enjoys the high and enviable position of being the representative man in this Province. No man can deny that he possesses a wider influence than any other private individual in the country, and he will, I feel sure, soon take a foremost rank amongst the statesmen of Canada.

A sound prediction! Yet three years before he had been engrossed in petty fur-trading accounts in Labrador!

On February 26, 1872, a great banquet was arranged in Mr. Smith's honour, attended by many of the leading citizens of Winnipeg and district. In proposing the toast of his health the Chairman observed: —

I find myself presiding over the most influential

meeting ever convened in the Province of Manitoba. When I look around me I see representatives not only from every section of the community, but representatives of every shade of politics.

Mr. Donald Smith represents more things than one. First of all he represents the Hudson's Bay Company. In the olden times, the Hudson's Bay Company did mean politics, but those days are gone. And even referring to the past, and looking to Mr. Donald A. Smith as a representative of the Hudson's Bay Company, some see in him a representative of a corporation which has not only made this place a Province, but which has also kept it. But now we have it as the part of the British territory which is to be the Egypt of the North American continent, and which is going to supply grain enough to feed the whole of Europe, if needs be. And in this respect our guest is welcomed here to-night heartily.

In another respect, Mr. Donald A. Smith is a representative man. He is representative of the County of Selkirk, and we will keep him that representative. That county has yet many interests to be attended to at Ottawa, and he is just the man to attend to them. We all require a cool, clear-headed business man like Mr. Donald A. Smith to watch our interests at Ottawa; and I defy any one to point out another man in Ontario or Quebec, who, from position, habits, and interests, is so well able to attend to our interests. In another and a very important respect, that honourable gentleman is also a representative man, and that is as to the future interests of the Province. Development is going on around us, and every day indicates further progress, and in aiding that development we have seen Mr. Donald A. Smith at the head of those in Canada

who have recently held meetings on the subject. Before five years, gentlemen, through the efforts of men like Mr. Smith, we will have railway and steamboat facilities. [Loud, prolonged cheering.]

Mr. Smith's response to this toast, was, so far, his "greatest oratorical effort," as he said playfully in a letter to his wife: —

When I look around me and see here representatives of every nationality and every interest in the Province, — when I see among the most respected of my hearers those who remind me of the past, of days long gone by, when civilization first took root in this land, and they were its honest, patient, hard-working pioneers, — when I see around me those who were settlers in the land, in the early days when the North-West and Hudson's Bay Companies ruled supreme here, — when I see these and others, who remind me of the worth and goodness of the past, — and when I see, too, many whose coming here is not so remote, but who yet cannot be called settlers of to-day, — when, gentlemen, I see an assemblage such as this met to do honour to myself, I feel I am not worthy of this great honour.

This gathering itself, in its numbers, influence, power, is one of the marks of that new era on which we have entered. Look back half a century ago and what was it? A wild peopled by savages, a noble, high-spirited race in some respects, but utterly without culture or comforts or definite purpose; and if to-day we have to congratulate ourselves on great and growing changes, we must not forget that to the early settlers we are indebted for much of that of which we now reap the fruits. They were the forerunners of civilization here, and, quite unostentatiously, while seeking to better themselves, they helped to make this

land one of which their countrymen might be proud. To men such as these we must accord our fullest gratitude.

Nor in speaking of those we must not forget others more recently come amongst us, and those of all origins who have been born and have grown up in the country whom we regard as brothers, and to whom we extend the right hand of fellowship and friendship, for they are those who can assist us in making this country what it is capable of becoming, one of the finest in the whole world. We are now one people, and as such must stand firm and undivided. There have been, it is true, differences in the past and (Sir, I am not going to degenerate into politics in making this allusion) there must ever be differences among men — for when we do not know one another, how is it possible there can be any mutual understanding? But when we come into close contact, we find our fellow-men animated by the same feelings of friendliness as we ourselves, and our little differences are readily reconciled.

Reference has been made to my connection with the Hudson's Bay Company. Well, gentlemen, I am not a little proud of that connection. I am here, it may be said, at the close of the first era in the history of that great Company. If I may be pardoned a somewhat personal allusion, I would say that about ninety years ago, my own relatives and friends were among the originators of the North-West Company, which subsequently amalgamated with the Hudson's Bay Company. It is a somewhat singular coincidence that I should see the last of the old régime of the Hudson's Bay Company; and have been empowered by that Company to aid it in taking up a new lease of prosperity — a prosperity in which all the present and future

inhabitants of this land are closely concerned. For the interests of that Company, and of the other Provinces which will grow out of this great North-West, are intimately bound up, and they must be prosperous.

The people of this North-West Territory are justly proud of their country. They are determined, and their children will, I doubt not, follow on this determination, to make this a happy, a free, and a glorious country, — the finest under the flag of which we all present are proud. It is undoubtedly a country to awaken pride. See the vast and fertile plains stretching between us and the Rocky Mountains. Look westward, northward, and say, Is not this land of ours a goodly heritage, with its gold and silver, coal and minerals almost without end, — and, beyond and before all, with a soil and a climate unsurpassed on this globe, and with an abundance of natural facilities for transport? It is a land needing only the sturdy industrious tillers of the soil to bring forth abundance, not for their use alone, but to send to the other Provinces of the Dominion, and beyond, to be wafted across the sea to gladden the hearts of the poor in other countries. All we need here to open up the country is population and increased railway facilities, and these will come, and gentlemen, they will come soon. Before long we will be, through the aid of railways, almost within speaking distance of the other Provinces. The prospect is certainly a bright one, and we may well congratulate ourselves on the future of the country, and bend all our energies unitedly to its development. If we have not known each other so well as we might in the past, our course can be a wiser, and more friendly course in the future. We can atone for all the regrets of the past

by a determination to think better of each other hereafter.

This present demonstration I regard as having a bearing far beyond the tribute to me. It will indicate not only to our own people of Manitoba, but to our fellow-subjects in other parts of the Dominion, and to our friends across the Atlantic, that we possess that union which is strength. There are many here from that old loved land across the sea, and do not our thoughts often wander there? Whether Englishmen, Scotchmen, Irishmen, or Frenchmen, the warmest feelings of our hearts go out to the land we have left — our aspirations are for the good of our common country; and we desire to join with our brethren in the other Provinces in doing our share to advance the interests of the Empire. Our object is a common one, and we are brothers seeking to promote it. There are thousands in Ontario and Quebec looking wistfully to those who have gone before them here; and are they not equally interested with us in the welfare of this heritage of ours?

At present, Sir, we are pleased to call ourselves a simple people, simple because we are guileless, and I trust we will ever remain so in that sense. But, looking to the share of prosperity which is already ours, it may be well said of us that we are very far from being simple, but will be able to keep our own with any who come among us. If the race is fairly run, both will come out together at the end. The Chairman has been pleased to allude to the share I am taking in railway enterprises for this country. I have certainly done this with very great satisfaction. My single influence, I feel, can have but very little weight in these matters.

But I have already gone forward, and shall not fail to continue to do so, and show to those capable of advancing the interests of the Province and Territory that we have here a country which well deserves to be advanced. I believe that without fail the knowledge of this fact will attract to this land the men and capital who will promote its best interests.

In bringing my remarks to a close, I beg to assure this assemblage, representing as it does all classes, denominations, and every interest in the Province, — and right proud am I of it, — of those destined to become their neighbours, — that the newcomers will not be men coming here with a single desire to empty the pockets of the people of the country, but come to work with them, cordially, heartily, loyally. As representing — however unworthily — the people of Selkirk in the Parliament at Ottawa, I have felt my own shortcomings, but allow me to say it, that wherein I have failed it has not been owing to the heart, but the head. The will has not been wanting, in whatever respect that I have been deficient. [Loud cries of "Donald A." forever.] You are very partial, gentlemen, and tell me that I have deserved well at your hands. It shall be my endeavour — if to some extent I have deserved well — to seek further to promote the interests of those whom I have the honour of representing.

Reading this speech, after a lapse of more than forty years, one is affected by the insistency with which he struck, during the whole of this long period, the same note, and the constancy with which he maintained it. There is audible here al-

most the antique minstrel touch, with the oft-repeated burden —

> "O come into the golden West,
> The fairest of all lands, I ween;
> She stands and bids you be her guest,
> Though darkling surges roll between."

There are passages in the speech nearly identical with those delivered a year or two before he died. As was said of an older minstrel, "Others may have sung sweetlier of his country, but none, methinks, so dearly and so long."[1]

The Dominion general elections of 1872 were hotly contested in Manitoba. Mr. Smith was opposed in Selkirk by a Mr. Wilson, who, however, received only sixty-two votes. In Lisgar, Dr. Schultz was also reëlected, while in Provencher, Sir George Cartier, whose defeat in Montreal East was a matter of national regret, was returned by acclamation, Louis Riel having, as we have seen, retired in his favour. Alas, Cartier was already a dying man.

The day of the election was marked by riot and disorder in Winnipeg. Aided by a number of rough characters, Mr. Smith's opponents set out to intimidate the electors, so that from the opening of the polls the whole day was a continuous series of mêlées, including two attempts to capture the poll-books. At St. Boniface, on the other side of the river, pistols and axe-handles were freely used on Mr. Smith's supporters. Happily, no serious injuries were inflicted. Before the day was over it was

[1] Thomas: *Mabinogian.*

found necessary to call out the militia to defend the poll in Winnipeg, the small police force being powerless to cope with the rioters. The local chief of police was seriously wounded, and others of the force sustained injury, the whole day's lawlessness culminating in the destruction of the printing-offices of the *Manitoban* and *Le Métis*, upon which the mob vented its rage "in vindication of their rights as free-born Britons."

Following the resignation of the Macdonald Ministry another election took place.

From Chief Factor Robert Hamilton to R. MacFarlane

NORWAY HOUSE, October, 1873.

I hear there is to be an immediate dissolution of the Dominion House which will cause great excitement all over the country. Mr. Smith seems doubtful whether he will offer himself again as a candidate for Selkirk; but I rather fancy he will, as I believe it is necessary that the Company should have some representative in the Commons of Canada. You will see by the papers that Mr. Smith took a very prominent part in the overturn of the late Ministry. Some bigoted partisans say he was much to blame for the action he took, but honest men, who are not bigoted, are unanimous in his praise.

On Cartier's death, Riel was again elected member for Provencher at a bye-election. The cause of this persistent action of Riel's friends was probably a desire to strengthen his position in meeting the

charge of murder which hung over him. But it was clear that the immediate effect was to aggravate the hostility felt toward the half-breed leader, both in Manitoba and the East.

At last, on the application of the Attorney-General of Manitoba, true bills were found against Riel and Lépine for the murder of Thomas Scott on the 14th of March, 1870. Lépine was in consequence arrested and committed to gaol, but was subsequently released on bail. As Riel had concealed himself and the warrant could not be served, the Attorney-General resorted to process of outlawry against him.

The discussion which followed this renewed the feelings of irritation which divided the English and French populations and compelled the attention of the Government and the Legislature to what had become a dangerous and anomalous condition of affairs in respect to the persons implicated in the murder of Scott.

On the 1st of April, 1874, Mr. Smith moved that a select committee of nine members be appointed by the House of Commons

to enquire into the causes of the difficulties which existed in the North-West in 1869 and 1870 and to those which have retarded the granting of the amnesty announced in the Proclamation issued by the late Governor-General of Canada, Sir John Young; and further to enquire whether, and to what extent, other promises of amnesty have since been made; with power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Of this Amnesty Committee, Donald A. Smith, M.P., was chosen Chairman.

On April 15, a debate lasting two days arose on a motion of Mr. Mackenzie Bowell, to the effect that Louis Riel, having been charged with murder, having fled from justice, and having failed to obey an order of the House of Commons to attend in his place on the 9th instant, be expelled from the House. The resolution was carried.[1]

In September, 1874, the Amnesty Committee issued its report, which, as Professor Chester Martin shrewdly observes, "proved of greater value to the historical investigator than to a perplexed Ministry." It remained, therefore, for the Governor-General, Lord Dufferin, to cut the Gordian knot by commuting the sentence upon Lépine to two years' imprisonment and forfeiture of political rights. Riel was declared an outlaw, and after a term of pretended insanity at Longue Pointe, he

[1] Two amendments to this resolution were proposed. The first, by Mr. Holton, member for Chateauguay, was to the effect that further consideration should be deferred until the receipt of the report of the Amnesty Committee. The second, by Mr. Mousseau, member for Bagot, prayed Her Majesty to exercise the Royal prerogative of pardon for all crimes and offences committed in the Province of Manitoba during the disturbances. The first of these was negatived by a majority of 41, viz., 117 against 76, and the original resolution was carried by a majority of 56, viz., 124 against 68.

"On an examination of the accompanying division lists I find that the first amendment was supported almost unanimously by the French members, who also voted against the original resolution. Although the supporters of the second amendment were principally French, it will be observed that it failed to secure the suffrage of a considerable proportion of the French vote." (Earl of Dufferin to Earl of Carnarvon, 23d of April, 1874.)

crossed the American border and disappeared from view until the rebellion of 1885 caused him to re-emerge as leader of the half-breeds. For this he paid the death-penalty at Regina in September of that year.[1]

NOTE TO CHAPTER XIV

Disgraceful Scene in the House

Mr. Donald A. Smith, after answering an attack made upon him by Sir John A. Macdonald, last night, began to reply to the slanders Dr. Tupper circulated in regard to him during the last picnic campaign. But the honourable member for Cumberland (Dr. Tupper) raised the point of order that Mr. Smith had no right to refer to this question in the closing hours of the session when he could have brought the matter up at any time during the past three months. The Speaker decided that the member for Selkirk was in order, and Dr. Tupper commenced to interrupt Mr. Smith in the most unseemly fashion. Mr. Smith kept his temper well, and in a few well-chosen sentences showed conclusively the unfounded character of the charges brought against him. Finding the efforts of his col-

[1] In a state paper dealing with the matter Lord Dufferin considered five pleas for amnesty: (1) That Archbishop Taché went to Manitoba as a plenipotentiary authorized by the British and Canadian Governments. (2) that an amnesty was promised to Judge Black; Ritchot, and Scott, the delegates sent by the Red River settlers to Ottawa. (3) that those who killed Scott represented a *de facto* government. (4) that Riel had been paid to leave the country; and (5) that Governor Archibald had availed himself of the assistance of Riel, Lépine, and others in preventing the Fenian invasion, threatened in 1871. He disallowed all the pleas but the last. (J. Lewis, *Canada and its Provinces.*)

league to shut down the honourable member for Selkirk unavailing, Sir John A. Macdonald came to the rescue, and for several seconds the leader of the Opposition and his right bower made the Chamber ring with epithets of an ungentlemanly character, Mr. Speaker trying in vain to keep them within bounds. In the midst of the confusion Black Rod was admitted, and with difficulty delivered His Excellency's message summoning the Commons to the Senate Chamber. No sooner had the Sergeant-at-Arms shouldered the Mace and the Speaker begun to descend from the Chair than Dr. Tupper and Sir John renewed their rowdy conduct. A rush was made for Mr. Smith, and it was feared that blows were about to be exchanged. The Speaker called out to the Sergeant-at-Arms to arrest the disorderly members, an order which could only refer to Sir John A. Macdonald, Dr. Tupper, and Mr. Rochester, who were with difficulty restrained from striking Mr. Smith. The noise and disorder continued, the Speaker being unable to leave the House on account of the riotous throng around the door. After the lapse of a few minutes, during which the scene of confusion was simply indescribable, another order was given for the arrest of the turbulent members, but by this time the ringleaders had either exhausted their fury, or had awakened to the consequences of their indecent behaviour, since they made for the lobby with commendable speed, and allowed the Speaker to pass on to the Senate Chamber. A more disorderly scene was never witnessed in Parliament, and the country cannot but condemn the conduct of those who so far forgot their dignity as to make a bear-garden out of the House of Commons of Canada. (The *Toronto Globe*, May 11, 1878.)

CHAPTER XV[1]

THE HEAD OF THE FUR-TRADE

1870–1874

LET us now turn from Donald Alexander Smith, the rising politician and capitalist, to present his activities as head of the Hudson's Bay Company in Canada. Before me lie many hundreds, even thousands, of letters written to and from the Chief Commissioner during a period of nearly half a century, not merely when he occupied that important office, but when he had risen above it to become Governor of the Company in 1889. This correspondence between himself and the widely scattered officers from Labrador to the Yukon, who looked to him as their champion as well as their official superior, well repays perusal, for it affords us, as nothing else can, an intimate glimpse into the actual conditions, character, and *personnel* of the Canadian fur-trade of the period.

Chief Factor Hamilton to Chief Trader Rankin

NORWAY HOUSE, 21st December, 1872.

I hear that Mr. Smith has again been returned by a large majority for the Dominion Parliament. Of course I am glad that since he did come forward he was

[1] In the preparation of this chapter and Chapter XX, I beg especially to acknowledge my indebtedness to Roderick MacFarlane, Esq., of Winnipeg, late Chief Factor in the Hudson's Bay Company's service and a beneficiary under Lord Strathcona's will.

victorious, but I would much rather see him retired from political life, as the business of the fur-trade is sufficient to give full occupation to any one man who holds the position of Chief Commissioner.

The fur-trade as it existed when Mr. Smith became Chief Commissioner, originated in 1821, and its members represented the proprietary of the North-West Company of Montreal, which coalesced in that year with the Hudson's Bay Company of England. The object of the coalition was to extinguish the ruinous rivalry which had subsisted for many years between a body of capitalists holding a monopoly in London, and an association of skilful and experienced traders, conducting an opposition business in the "Indian country." It was further to give the latter the legal status of the former, and to secure for them a proper remuneration for their services. The Hudson's Bay Company was to provide the capital; the officers of the fur-trade were to be the working or wintering partners.

By gradual and almost insensible modifications, the original scheme became greatly altered; so that while the relation of the wintering partners of the fur-trade to the shareholders remained as originally constituted, their own relation to the rights and assets, contributed in 1821 as their share of the enterprise, had been altered to their disadvantage. Toward the shareholders, their relation remained the same, because two fifths of the annual profits of the Company continued to be their share. But

CHIEF COMMISSIONER SMITH AND HIS HUDSON'S BAY COLLEAGUES, 1871

Left to right: Lawrence Clark, Donald A. Smith, James Bissett (seated on the rug), P. W. Bell, George McTavish, Alexander McDonald, Colin Rankin

after 1870 their business and privileges were thrown open to the whole world. They became practically debarred from fur-trading pursuits over a large portion of the original field, in consequence of the surrender by the Company of their chartered monopoly and of the extinction of the trade in those portions of the territory available for settlement, as well as its deterioration in districts where opposition fur-trading came to prevail.

The grievance was felt to be greater because in the lapse of time since 1821, the remuneration of every class of servants, excepting that to which the commissioned officers belong, has advanced — in some instances very largely indeed; and because the success of their exertions has so enhanced the position of the Company in England as to enable its stock to command a very high premium. This fact has become directly instrumental in damaging the prospects of the traders, through the advent of new shareholders, who, in many cases, ignorant of the altered circumstances of the trade and country, having obtained their interest at a high price, have looked to the trade to obtain a profit on their investment, proportioned to its success in the past, and to the price they have paid for it.

I have shown that among the events which occurred to modify the original position of the traders, the most important was that which took place in 1863, when the entire body of "sleeping partners" sold their interest in the Company to strangers, at an advance of three hundred per cent on the par value of their stock; and the nominal capital of the

Company became £2,000,000 instead of £500,000 sterling — by a mere arbitrary act and without any addition to its assets. It has been seen also that the commissioned officers of the fur-trade knew nothing of this monster transaction until it was completed. They were then informed that they had no interest in the matter as their relation to the shareholders, as defined by the Deed Poll, remained unaffected. To this view, the officers did not assent, very properly holding that the change was one in which they and their successors were vitally interested.

Chief Trader Roderick McKenzie to D. A. Smith

March 27th, 1871.

As you will be by this time in London on behalf of the Commissioned Officers, I sincerely trust you will be able to ascertain the truth of the fact alleged by Mr. Isbister that at the time of the sale in 1863 that Governor Berens and the Committee allocated the sum of £90,000 to form a fund, out of which the active and retired wintering partners were to be recompensed in the event of their making a protest against the sale, concerning which they had not been consulted.[1]

[1] "Some time after the old proprietors of the Hudson's Bay Company sold out their interests, in 1863, to the new concern for £1,500,000 sterling, it was currently reported that the former Governor (Berens) and Committee left the sum of £90,000 with, and under the control of, their successors in office, for the purpose of pacifying them, should the active and retired wintering partners in this country give trouble in regard to the effected sale change; but as the latter knew nothing of this secret arrangement, and also failed to make as vigorous a protest as had been anticipated, the money was never disbursed and probably went into the general business.

Such an action would be entirely in line with what we now know to have been the old Committee's fears on the subject. If the statement is true and this contingency fund was created where is it now? Why has it not been disbursed?

To this a reply was a long time in forthcoming, Mr. Smith having in the interval returned from meeting the shareholders in London.

To Chief Trader Roderick McKenzie

14th November, 1871.

My dear Sir:—

Your letter of the 27th of March last duly reached me in London, but as I was then deeply engaged in affairs demanding immediate attention, I put it aside for reply when I could do so to advantage.

I may say that I have for some time been aware of the report to which you refer, of a special fund being

In 1865, however, when the officers on active service insisted on a guarantee, the then Governor and Committee agreed to give them this, at the rate of £275 sterling per one eighty-fifth share, for the five years from outfit 1865 to 1869 inclusive. They had never asked for or obtained the consent of the shareholders therefor, very likely because of their belief that the unclaimed £90,000 would enable them to meet any demands that might arise thereunder, and also explain matters satisfactorily. Unfortunately, however, for us, by 1869, Governor Head and two or three of his associate Directors had died; the first Riel insurrection broke out, as a consequence of the transfer of the Company's territories to Canada, and Governor Mactavish, who was fully acquainted with the guarantee and the fur-trade rights, departed this life in July, 1870. No new man, however able, could possibly grasp everything at a bound. In 1863, Sir Edmund Head assured the commissioned officers that their fur-trade interests would not be adversely affected by the change in the Company's proprietorship." (Private memorandum addressed to the Governor and Committee, 1877.)

set aside by the former Governor and Committee at the time of the sale of the Company in 1863. But what basis there was for the report was a little difficult to ascertain, whatever my own private opinion might be, without an examination of the Company's books, a privilege which the Committee showed little inclination to extend to me, and I felt I could not prudently insist upon. Fortunately the issue made it unnecessary, and I was able, after much heated discussion, to make such terms as, if not all we felt we deserved, the Committee and shareholders could be persuaded, without a legal process, to give.

You may rest assured that I employed every argument at my disposal, and my personal friendship with the Governor was of much service. But you will understand that in a corporation of this kind there are forces which even the Governor cannot control.

DON. A. SMITH.

The surrender to the Crown of the chartered rights and privileges held by the Company, and the subsequent inclusion of Rupert's Land in the Dominion of Canada, deprived, then, the officers of any rights which were not open to the world at large. This was the end of privilege, and was followed by systematic immigration on a large scale, and by the imposition of heavy customs duties levied on every article of trade employed from end to end of the country. Competition was systematized, the area of fur-trading further restricted, expenses enormously increased, and profits consequently diminished. Yet, on the other hand, the shareholders came to be remunerated to an extent

so liberal that in twenty years it had considerably more than extinguished their entire capital as valued previously to 1863. Practically bound for life to the Company, and largely ignorant of any other business, the wintering partners had no resource except in the fur-trade.

In June, 1871, Sir Stafford Northcote had made a speech to the shareholders of the Company in London, in which he discussed the whole position and policy of the Company. His biographer says:—

He recommended a complete and thorough reorganization of the fur-trade, on a system involving large expenditure of money. A number of the shareholders preferred to drop the fur-trade, and trust to the land and sales of land. He, on the contrary, showed that the Company had increased in its imports of furs, that prices were good, and that the unprofitableness of the trade arose from the greater expense of its management and working. These expenses would be diminished, he conceived, by the new methods of transport, by the new railway system of Canada and the United States, and by the Company's own introduction of steamers.

For all these purposes, "new blood," new officers, were needed in the Company's services. Now the actual officers were, in a way, sharers in the profits and members of the Company, not mere employees, and their consent to the changes was necessary. The officers like Mr. Donald Smith, a member for Manitoba in the Dominion Parliament, were men of weight and importance. They were especially necessary in dealings with the Indians. It was therefore most undesirable to dismiss them, with the fur-trade by way

of compensation. They claimed and had a "moral right" to a share of the famous £300,000 which they did not get. Other claims they had, very strong morally, but not valid in law. To dissatisfy them would not only be unfair and unkind, but, owing to their position in the country, most inexpedient. He calculated, therefore, the value of the "retiring interests" of the officers, and this sum he advised the Company to pay — namely, £100,000 sterling.[1]

At the meeting of the officers at Fort Alexander in 1870 and afterwards the utmost anxiety was expressed as to their future.

Factor J. Lockhart to Donald A. Smith

ABITIBI, 9th September, 1870.

I long very much to know if anything regarding our future management was decided on. The Deed Poll is now, of course, a dead letter, and should the guarantee not be renewed, our dividends will not pay for salt to our porridge. Speaking of the Deed Poll puts me in mind of something I wanted to ask you. You know the terms of the Deed Poll. Now, the Company must, of necessity, fail, it seems to me, in performing their part of the contract when they sell their chartered rights without our sanction. Don't you think we have a good case for damages against the Company on that account, the Deed Poll having been made out under the powers granted them by the charter?

Notwithstanding his misgivings, then, Mr. Smith

[1] Andrew Lang, *Earl of Iddesleigh*. It should be pointed out, however, that both the calculation and the advice originated not with Sir Stafford, but with Mr. Smith.

found himself and the wintering partners committed to the fur-trade or rather to a concern based and buttressed by the fur-traffic, while the Company — that is, the shareholders — were to profit exclusively by the sale of lands which would ultimately prove of enormous value. Unhappily most of the wintering partners, although they had themselves won and maintained all the vast territory not included in the Company's original charter, held land in little esteem. They dared not, moreover, take risks — and the suggestion of half-profits in fur, lands, and general trading, thereby relinquishing their dependence altogether on the London corporation, was unsupported. This would have meant the sacrifice of their retiring pensions, and might mean for a time the abandonment of any profit whatever.

A Chief Trader, already quoted, wrote to Mr. Smith: —

Our immediate destiny is in your hands; you know our life — you know how arduous our labours are. In nearly every instance they involve long servitude, separation from friends and relations, many hardships which we feel more sensitively as time wears away, and also family separations of a costly character, unless the alternative be accepted, of permitting children to fall uneducated into the conditions of semi-barbarism. In some cases, to our knowledge, expenses of education have eaten up nearly the whole of the comparatively small emoluments obtained for service. Other hardships are occasional liabilities to starvation and much privation, insufficiency, and poor description of food,

exposure, increasing anxiety for the trade's success, and the maintenance of those committed to the charge of District and Post Managers. These might be, as they often are, borne cheerfully even for a long period, were the prospects of retirement on an adequate competency in sight; but, failing this hope, they were almost unsupportable. It is true there are exceptions where officers and clerks happen to be stationed where *civilization* exists; but these are not very numerous, while every regular servant of the Company is exposed, at least, to the possibility of being removed to the interior.

Another veteran fur-trader [1] thus expresses his mind: —

To Chief Commissioner Smith

I am not a sufficiently good lawyer to decide on the legal points of our rights. I always objected to Vice-Chancellor Giffard's decision on the Hudson's Bay House affair; not on the award, but on the grounds for it. My view is this: All property sent out from England is charged against the fur-trade, for which we pay five per cent interest per annum. Part of this is expended in trade. This portion is divided in the proportions assigned by the Deed Poll, part pays our servants' wages. This is repaid the Company with one year's interest before a division takes place. Part also buys provisions, etc., but does not bear interest, an inventory remaining in the country as undivided profits. Now, our servants are paid and fed by the fur-trade, that is, before any profits are divided. The ex-

[1] Chief Trader Fortescue.

penditure of the year is deducted from the gross profit, and replaced to the capital, letting the balance go as expenditure. Now, everything made or done by our servants stands in place of this portion of goods or money paid them, which is already expended and charged the outfit finally and unreservedly. Consequently, according to my view, all the work of the servants represents profits undivided. It is not the result of trade, or the returns of part of the goods charged and expended, but it is the result of servants' labour or returns of another portion of the goods, charged and expended — on both of which, for the time being, interest has been paid, and only differs from the furs in being undivided.

Therefore, I hold that the fur-trade was and is entitled to two fifths of the proceeds when the business is finally wound up and the partnership between the stockholders and ourselves dissolved. Meanwhile this two fifths belongs to us, not individually, but as a body equivalent to corporate under the Governor and Committee's seal by the Deed Poll, in trust for the trade as long as it shall be carried on. . . . Meanwhile, my idea of reorganization is, keep down expenses, substitute steam for hard labour wherever you can, and as little cart work as possible. The change in the Bay would be immense. A small vessel could call at Churchill and come right up to the factory to discharge cargo. We would want no sloops, no schooner, and half the men.

In the extracts from the general correspondence now to be given, it will be understood that where the name of either sender or recipient is omitted the letter is either from or to the Chief Commissioner.

From Chief Commissioner Smith

MONTREAL, 10th November, 1871.

You will be glad to hear that as a result of our recent conferences steam will be introduced on the Saskatchewan, and also on Lake Manitoba next year. Before 1875, we trust that all the outfits will be withdrawn from York Factory and a single steam vessel supplying all the Hudson Bay posts. The reduction of servants will follow the introduction of steam, which will also do away with the enormous pay to tripmen and the immense amount of provisions consumed in voyaging. Married men are in future to support their own families, not only in provisions, but wood, lodgings, and everything else (that is, the servants for the latter arrangement). Officers, of course, will be found quarters as usual, and the abolition of the debt system over the whole country is the great Indian reform aimed at.

Unfortunately the details of the new system were not thoroughly entered into, when that Fenian Raid on Red River took place, and broke up Council and everything else. As soon as all was quiet, I was obliged to leave for Canada, and Mr. Christie's presence in Saskatchewan was imperatively demanded.

From Chief Trader J. McDougall

FORT SIMPSON, 2d December, 1871.

Contrary to expectation we had no opposition from the Yukon, the Americans failing to return through a scarcity of goods. The Indians were all hunting to the eastward of the post and nearly equally distant

from Lapp House, except a small party of the Black River tribe. We were altogether cut off from communication with the lower Indians without any prospect of its being otherwise, and there was the fact that we were on American soil and would be obliged to remove, handing another post to them in a central place among the Indians and perhaps laying the Company open to be brought in for the heavy penalty which, by the laws of the United States, is incurred by all foreigners found trading in their possessions, besides having to walk at a time when we had no opposition and not able to take the Indians with us.

On speaking to the Indians, Red Leggings [1] and party consented to trade at Lapp House; so seeing that we would not lose by it, but rather gain by having only one post on the other side of the mountains, I took the responsibility on my own shoulders when the trade was finished, set fire to the building, and after seeing it burnt to the ground, started with all our property for Lapp House. The Black River Indians are now hunting close to Lapp House. Red Leggings came up here this fall to see that proper arrangements were made for his people. Don't think that I have done a hasty thing without weighing all our chances. The Indians are safer now than before by being further removed from the neighbourhood of Fort Yukon. If the business of Lapp House is conducted properly the Company will not lose a single skin by the abandonment of the Ramparts. The returns of that post were £1500 this year, £500 increase on those of the preceding year.

Lapp House ought now to send out as good if not better returns than any other post in the district. Those who have not a perfect knowledge of that part

[1] A famous Indian chief.

of the country may find the returns of the last two outfits very small when compared with what used to be sent from Yukon, but more than two thirds (or about that) of the returns of that post were procured from the Gens du Butte and Indians living on the Lower Yukon, who are now all cut off from any communication with us.

The Americans will never, I think, do us much harm from that side, nor are they likely to try beyond Lapp House.

From Chief Trader Fortescue

Norway House, 28th December, 1871.

The first and most important thing to be done is to lessen our freight expenses, and that only can be done by getting on steam. On a thorough examination of the Water Hen River, it was found to be too shallow for a steamer to pass, at least such a steamer as could navigate with safety Lake Winnipegosis; this was a sad blow to all prearranged plans, but rather than give up steam I urge that a small steamer should be placed on Manitoba Lake, notwithstanding the expense. The frightful expense attending our present mode of transit and transport cannot be borne. Clark was in favour of having a steamer on Lake Winnipeg and opening up the communication over the Grand Rapids, but for my part, I do not approve of that route, as it would necessitate the keeping up of a great many oxen at the rapid and I am sure the expenses would be very great.

There are many details in the new arrangement I should like to know. What the Company mean by admitting the fur-trade to other branches of their business I do not know, whether it refers to business

already opened, or to be opened in the future. The estimated probable emolument of a single share at £400 presupposes some other data than we ourselves possess.

From Chief Trader Fortescue

Norway House, January 28th, 1872.

I do not see how they can make it pay as they anticipate, but as I said before, we have no data to go on. I see one thing, evidently they are preparing for a reduction in the fur-trade and intend using us as a "cat's-paw" to increase the value of their lands, i.e., make us open the country at our expense to make the lands valuable, and in the mean time the main points of the new Deed Poll remain the same as before. The old bugbear of five per cent still stands, and this is my stumbling-block. I do not see how the concern can pay even this — increased imports and of course increased interest and taxation into the bargain. No reduction we can make in our expenses can compensate for the two great incubi on our trade. I may be wrong, but I have always thought so. I wish we could all meet and come to an unanimous decision on our future line of conduct. The whole future of the clerks and us, the "primus incubus" of the trade, depends on our action now.

If we accept the new Deed Poll and it turns out a failure, all future generations will say we sold them. That is what I fear most. I shall not follow the crowd if I can help it, but it is no use, of course, standing alone. None of us have been asked to accept it yet, but the impression at home is that we will jump at it.

Under the arrangement of 1871 the old Deed Poll was abolished and a new one took its place. Here is the frank opinion of one of the Factors: —

I submit that the new Deed Poll is not what we want. We, and the Company in England, have *not* common interests. I should have been better pleased to have seen it settled in this way: Twenty-five per cent of the gross profits given to the fur-trade, and wipe out the interest account altogether. We should then always be insured against a blank dividend. But you know the state of the case is this: The Company at home made a bad bargain. They have £700,000 capital lying idle until this land comes in. The shareholders do not yet understand our position as a body. They think we share the profits of sales of land also — all but those who spoke at the meetings and the Committee. The speakers were little better than sharpers, and it is very strange that no one told them, when complaining of the dividend, that the dividend paid was only on half of each share, viz., that employed in the fur-trade, or £1,000,000 out of the £2,000,000, and that the remainder was lying unprofitable and carried no dividend. I hold there is common justice enough among any large body of men in England to have swamped these speculators and made them do us justice. The *prima-facie* reading of the agreement was certainly not that of the Deed Poll, though the construction of the latter might certainly have been put upon it. We all were dissatisfied; one or two of us spoke about holding out. Although I was skeptical on the other branches of profit so much talked of, I also thought you were in possession of information not intended for the *profane vulgar*. I

accordingly signed, and recommended all my friends to do likewise. Of course we know the indemnification was an object to all of us. If any of us refused to sign, we lost the indemnification except by law. The majority were sure to sign, especially the factors, and if the suit were to be contested, how could one or two juniors carry it on alone.

From Chief Factor D. MacArthur

WINNIPEG, 15 February, 1872.

I am very glad now to be able to say that the depression which has hung so heavily on every branch of business in Canada and the States appears to be lifting off by slow and well-marked degrees and there are indications that in another year we shall have fairly entered upon a new period of prosperity. The fur-trade has perhaps suffered more severely than any other, and it will probably be the last to recover from the effects of the depression. The Company carried £50,000 to the debit of Profit and Loss last outfit, and judging from the recent sales in London, which showed a decline of from twenty to forty per cent, as compared with the previous one, we cannot hope for a much improved statement for this outfit. Notwithstanding all this, I have the utmost confidence in the future of the fur-trade under competent management. The concern stands on a tripod, viz., the Governor and Committee, virtually Mr. Armit, and the immortal, versatile, ubiquitous, and ambitious Donald A. If I am not mistaken there is a storm brewing. It is simply iniquitous that the commissioned officers should be compelled to work for nothing as they are doing at present under the precious new Deed Poll.

Some amongst the older officers decided that the time had come to retire. Thus in May, 1872, Chief Trader Roderick McKenzie, writes to a fellow-factor in the Peace River district: —

You will have heard that I left Lac Loche. I could not stomach the stringent rules of the new Deed Poll, and I could not see that the flattering title of a Factor would put me on a better footing than I was before, when under the shade of the old charter. If we had insisted in participating in the sale of lands there might be some hopes of a certain remuneration for our services, which under the present régime with all the expense is very doubtful. But I must not be discouraging you. Of course you have a different opinion and I trust, for your own sake as well as others, that you will not be disappointed.

From Factor Henry Hardisty

Carlton House, January 21st, 1872.

How are you satisfied as to the settlement of the Company's affairs at home, as touching the interests of the wintering partners? All the officers in this section appear to be very much contented, that is, the commissioned officers. What is to become of us it is hard to say, but I suppose we have to scratch along as usual.

Slowly but with certainty would it dawn upon the minds of the wintering partners that they should have held out for the lands, their enterprise, strength, industry, and patience had won. The Company was again to become a power in the land and through the land.

The Company's Land Holdings

Holding as it does one twentieth of the lands of the Province, [the Company] must ever wield an immense influence which must hereafter be for good, inasmuch as it will be for their interest to foster everything tending to the progress of the country. With men like Mr. Donald A. Smith at the head of that corporation, the result must be to advance the interests of this Province, which is bound to be one of the greatest and most prosperous portions of the Dominion.[1]

For four years he strove to make fur what it had been under the old régime, and then he too gave his thoughts and energies to the land.

From Chief Factor Robert Campbell

CONNIE, PERTHSHIRE, 14th September, 1872.

What an inconsistent anomaly is this, and see the result, the ruin of the fur-trade. Though the resources are abundant, the country still rich in furs and ores, etc., and no want of its well-trained officers to take them out available for the market, still you are kept waiting in anxious suspense, for orders and supplies, like boys looking at the moon, or a traveller waiting on the bank of a river, till the stream of water pass by and allow him to pass over dry shod. The ancient Ephesians were worshippers of the great goddess Diana, and so is ———, in practice at least, of politics and procrastination. But what is surprising, that so many able officers of long experience look on in pensive silence on this vein in which they are suffering, in mind and purse, and not one is found honest and manly enough to represent the real and true state of affairs in

[1] *The Manitoban*, February 25, 1872.

the north, though bound in honour to do their utmost to promote the fur-trade. Do they do it? No! ! ! They are waiting, like the impotent man who waited thirty and eight years for the moving of the water of the pool, and lo, "another steppeth down before him," and so with you in the Hudson Bay. The Company have a capital of £800,000 afloat in business, but from procrastination, your sale and fur-trading shops in Red River and throughout the country are and have been for the last two years next to empty to meet the demands of trade.

You will be sorry to hear how shamefully my worthy friend Mr. ——— has been treated, and he and many others of the best officers, after waiting long in chaotic suspense, had and did leave in utter disgust. Poor Dr. Cowan, a man who would be an honour and an ornament to any profession or company, to have been treated thus, is a disgrace that many waters cannot wash away. The murdering rebels and pillagers of '69 and '70, who cost the Company £100,000 if well and correctly estimated, are all heroes and honourable men.

Another writes in March of the same year: —

From Chief Factor D. MacArthur to a fellow-officer

MONTREAL, 15th March, 1872.

You are doubtless familiar with the contents of the new Deed Poll. I do not think it offers sufficient inducement to active young men to remain in the service. I fancy if they give you a really good appointment, such as Chief Factor, you will remain, as I think it would be to your interest to do so. At the same

time, it must be acknowledged that seven years is a long time to bind one's self without any guarantee of even a moderate yearly income and not only so, but under a penalty of a thousand pounds.

D. A. Smith is here just now. He intends going to England on the 15th instant, from whence I suppose we may expect him here about the middle of May. None of the new appointments are made yet; they will be made as soon as he gets home and, of course, all from his recommendations. Just now every one is in a state of expectancy and there is a silence deep as death over all the service.

I am led to understand that there are a number of capitalists in Montreal who would be quite prepared to start a new fur company on the basis of the old North-West Company, provided they got half a dozen really experienced men to organize and prosecute the work of the interior.

A year or two later, a veteran at Stuart's Lake thus unburdens his soul: —

From Chief Factor William Charles

As for dividends, I dare say we must be thankful and take what we get. You cannot coerce the Company in London and they will not abate their power or patronage. The only way they can be forced is by a combination of the commissioned officers in the country. Instead of conceding only ten shares, we should have half the net profits. Just fancy their having taken out first about £52,000 and then six tenths of the remainder! As long as furs sell well, it's all right, even to those seeing the injustice of it all. But let bad times come and see how the officers will leave! I have been

so worried and troubled in spirit the last two years, that I care not whether I remain or not in the service, and God knows I have very little to live on and my children just at that age when they require so much money spent on their education. The Company's service seems to be the only one in which the people do not seem to enjoy life.

On one occasion we have Mr. Smith's view of the wintering partners cutting loose from London altogether.

One Chief Factor had written: —

If the commissioned officers would join a new Canadian Fur Company I am satisfied one will be got up before long, and of course experienced officers will have the first chance. We are apparently going to have a busy time in Manitoba this year. Large numbers of people are coming in to settle down and public works are about to be constructed, including a railway to Pembina, which will, when completed, connect us with the outside world. Then the price will go up by leaps and bounds and the London shareholders will get all the profit.

From Chief Commissioner D. A. Smith

Fort Garry, February 11th, 1873.

I have no doubt that such a prospect [a new fur-trading Company] might prove alluring to Sir Hugh Allan, and to many other capitalists; but I think you will understand why, after nearly thirty-five years' connection with the Hudson's Bay Company, I should feel called upon to oppose such a scheme. I quite recognize with you that the old order is past and that the

Company is not the same as it was in our young days, but my old allegiance survives and I am not yet without hope that we may once again work in unity and with success.

Many took the gloomiest view of the prospects of the wintering partners.

From Chief Trader J. Lockhart to a brother-officer

March, 1872.

I do not think you will make salt for your porridge for three or four years at least. The Chief Commissioner cares nothing and hopes nothing from the fur-trade. He expects to make all your fortunes by shop-keeping, but it is all bosh in my view. The same causes which have removed the fur-trade from the Company's hands will operate with regard to any other branch of trade, i.e., a freed trade. We could not compete with free traders in furs and make a profit. Neither can you in goods or otherwise. It is all very well for Donald A. Smith, with his £2000 secure annually, to puff the new arrangements. But "fine promises butter no parsnips," and you will all find yourselves fooled. We all thought the old Deed Poll a rather one-sided affair, but it was n't a circumstance to the present one. Only the same share of the profits to be divided among a greater number of officers with no retiring interest to look forward to; only six months' furlough and pay all food expenses for your families. These are only a few of the items. What comparison does it bear with the old one? For your sake and the sakes of a few other true friends of mine still in the service, I hope things may turn out all right, but I do not expect it, and would advise you to do as others have done, i.e., send

back their commissions, with the note, "Declined with thanks."

But I think I have said enough on the subject for the present, till we see what good the "new blood" to be infused into the service does.

Here is an extract from another letter: —

Are the Company fully determined to push to the uttermost the most unreasonable power which they assumed when drawing up the last Deed Poll? I think myself that so long as the dividends continue good there will not be much grumbling, but so soon as they fall below a reasonable figure, there will be an uprising over the whole country. I do hope I may meet you at Council, for there are some matters on which I would like very much to consult you and my brother-officers and which I think ought to be looked after at once.

Sometimes an old colleague made bold to speak his mind plainly to the Chief Commissioner and some of these harangues are amusing enough.

York Factory, 1872.

I should be very glad to keep you informed from time to time, as to the way the new Deed Poll operated now on our interests as manifested in the charges in the fur-trade ledger. Unfortunately I fear this will be the last year I shall have an opportunity of looking at them, and those that come out this year, if they do come, will only be for Outfit 1871. After this they will be sent direct to Red River, and I am sure of one thing, that there is not a man there who understands them, nor do I believe there are many more than yourself who would think of looking into them to see what we

were debited with and upon what we were charged interest.

You have no idea how down-in-the-mouth the arrival of every packet makes me. From all quarters I hear the same news, the same dissatisfaction prevails. But this cannot go on, and business will be ruined, unless some steps are taken to insure punctuality and give officers some idea of the policy the Company wish to be pursued. This will be sufficient. We have heads enough in the Northern Department to carry out any line if they will only let us know what it is.

You say that for some years a certain proportion of the outfits for the inland district would continue to be supplied via York Factory, thus placing me in a bad fix, for if you have sent home the corrected requisition, I should not have enough to supply much more than the Bay posts, and if not, why, of course I would have stock for the whole department as usual. What amount of goods is York Factory to supply?

Again, I have been ordered to reduce the establishment here. Now, if the same work is to be done I must keep the same staff of men. I lose thirteen this year, which is serious, as I have to pack the same outfits as formerly. Casks and cases must be made, boats must be built as usual, and I must have wood for the purpose and keep a gang of twelve men sawing all winter, and how am I to do this, if I have orders not to reëngage my men as my contracts fall in and they send me out none to replace them.

To make things better, Mr. ——— writes me to let him know "what districts I can supply for Outfit 1873 and Outfit 1874," when I know no more of the matter until the ship from England comes in than he does. Don't you think it would be better to give

me generous instructions of what districts are to be outfitted here each year and leave me responsible for doing it?

Cut off Red River, isolate it as much as possible from all knowledge of the intimate affairs of the country if we want to keep the fur-trade. Now, Mr. Mactavish desires to enhance the importance of Red River by making it the *dépôt* of the Company's account. Nobody but Mr. ——— and myself in this department know what is the amount of the York work, and it amuses me to hear outsiders say, "In a few years York will be only a small trading-post." It will be always the head of a district that usually turns out the second largest returns in the Northern Department, Red River being first, and from being in direct communication with London will always be equivalent to the head of a small department. In fact, it will be similar to Moose Factory exactly.

We are very poorly officered as it is, but if opposition finds its way unchecked down in this quarter they will find they will lose more than they do in Saskatchewan or Cumberland. I submit that Red River has more than enough to do to keep its own affairs going properly. In 1871 it only collected about £3000 worth of furs. Canadian buyers bought up all the rest. We all knew that Red River would lose the fur-trade, and that it would likely become the central market for Canada from all the surrounding districts, but we were told that to replace the fur-trade the Red River sale-shops would be developed, and probably show a greater profit, as the fur-trade was always more or less of a loss at Red River. But what do I find? Why, that the nominal profit and the amount of returns in Red River are nearly the same. Consequently, there has not been

sufficient profit on the sale-shops to more than cover the expenses of the district in 1871.

Certainly Chief Commissioner Smith did not spare himself in his endeavour, not only for the welfare of the London shareholders, but also for the wintering partners, whose chances of a share in the lands were now fast vanishing away. With them generally, it was fur-trade or nothing, the fur-trade that had led them and their forerunners into the wilderness for two centuries. For their sakes, then, the fur-trade must be made to pay. It was a Herculean task Donald Smith had set himself. To succeed permanently was, as we see now, impossible, for, in truth, in the affairs of this world no man can serve two masters. Yet that he did succeed for a time is a tribute to his sheer talent for management. As early as 1873, Professor G. M. Grant, who accompanied the civil engineer, Mr. (afterward Sir) Sandford Fleming, through the West, wrote: —

Nothing shows more conclusively the wonderful progress of Manitoba, and the settled condition into which it has emerged from the chaos of the last two or three years, than the fact that the Hudson's Bay Company sold at auction, the other day, in building lots, thirteen acres of the five hundred of their reserve around Fort Garry, at the rate of seven thousand dollars an acre. At half the rate for the rest, the Hudson's Bay Company will receive for this small reserve more than the money payment of £300,000 sterling, which Canada gave for the whole territory; and, if a few acres favourably situated bring so much, what must be the

value of the many million of acres transferred to the Dominion? The policy of the Company now is exactly the opposite of what it used to be: formerly all their efforts were directed to keep the country a close preserve; now they are doing all in their power to open it up. The times have changed and they have changed with them. And, regarding them merely as a Company whose sole object has been and is to look after their own interest and pay good dividends to the shareholders, their present policy is as sagacious for to-day as the former was for yesterday. While a fur-trading company, with sovereign rights, they did not look beyond their own proper work; they attended to that, and, as a duty merely incidental to it, governed half a continent in a paternal or semi-patriarchal way, admirably suited to the tribes that roamed over its vast expanses. But, as they can no longer be supreme, it is their interest that the country should be opened up; and they are taking their place among new competitors and preparing to reap a large share of the fruits of the development. For many a year to come, they must be a great power in our North-West.

In grasping Sir George Simpson's sceptre, Mr. Smith set about a thorough reorganization of the fur-trade. His attention was early drawn to the danger of American competition in the Yukon district and the borders of Alaska. Chief Trader MacFarlane wrote from the Far Northern territory:—

We are not only in danger of having the usual quiet placidity of a Northern life rudely broken in upon, but our trade is now so very seriously threatened by the encroachments of an active and enterprising opposi-

tion that in my opinion it is only by the immediate adoption of prompt and vigorous measures that we can hope to maintain our ascendancy in the district, which has hitherto been considered the mainstay of the Company.

The introduction and use of spirituous liquors as an article of traffic, by the Americans, necessarily added to their difficulties, besides proving detrimental to the Indians, and would, of course, materially affect their future hunts.

There can be no doubt that the American traders on the Yukon will, as soon as possible, try and push on in the direction of Selkirk and La Pierre's House next summer; however, I can hardly believe that they will ascend higher than Fort Yukon, but, as Jonathan is a very different animal from his slow-going predecessors, the Russians, we must not be surprised, but on the contrary well prepared to receive him, should he even attempt to reach the Mackenzie via the Mountains. It will be observed that three companies make use of boats, similar to but larger than ours, for the navigation of the different rivers, but as it is probable that they will eventually find it to their interest to amalgamate and thus become one powerful corporation, I have no doubt, that steam will shortly supersede — at least, to a considerable extent, the use of boats in that quarter.

A certain free-trader, Mr. Laberge, threatened to take possession of Fort Yukon because it was within the boundary. Both Chief Factor McDougall and his colleagues looked upon this as a piece of idle bravado, "characteristic of the person who was so soft as to give it expression in writing": —

From Chief Factor McDougall

Our right to continue trading on the Yukon can hardly be challenged even by the United States Government itself, let alone a company of private traders who have nothing whatever to do with the political side of the question. We have the right of discovery and possession in our favour. The true position of Fort Yukon has never been astronomically fixed, and even should it be found that we are within the boundary, so ignorantly settled upon by the Colonial Minister of 1825, who wantonly made over to a foreign power a large and important tract of country, discovered and explored by British subjects, the utmost, I fancy, the American Executive can do is to call upon us to pay customs duty on our imports for trade within their territory.

It seems to me that our position on the Yukon is somewhat similar to that we hold or recently held in Oregon, viz., that we have the same possessory rights, acquired in the same manner in the one as we had in the other country. It would, however, be advisable to enter into an arrangement with the United States Government in reference to this and other relative matters. If they mean to exact duties on our imports, could it not be made imperative on American citizens to pay similar duties on all goods imported by them into British territory, or better still, make the fur-trade free on both sides? The sale of spirituous liquors to the natives should, however, be strictly prohibited to both parties. But I need not have said so much on this subject, as you will doubtless know infinitely better than I do what course to follow in the circumstances.

There was a grave risk that the extensive and valuable territory on the west side of the mountains lying between Walrussia and British Columbia would become virtually an American possession. It was therefore urged upon the Chief Commissioner as absolutely necessary for the protection of the Company's trade on the Mackenzie from incursions from the westward, that immediate vigorous measures should be taken. For the trade and occupation of the country to the southward of Fort Selkirk, one or two posts should be established.

By referring to the map it will be seen that Dease's House and Frances Lake appear to be not only comparatively easy of approach from our western coast, but also the points which should be selected for the objects we would have in view, especially as I take it for granted that those posts would, with the nearest fort in New Caledonia, so effectually occupy the country as to preclude petty or other traders from attempting to reach the Mackenzie via the Fort Halkett route — the most impracticable and dangerous of all.

As the Americans have now established themselves at the Rendezvous, we cannot possibly avoid building at the mouth of the Que-hee-le River, the most central situation for a fort. Trading expeditions by boats would not answer now, as they would probably arrive too late at the Rendezvous. When Mr. M——— goes down in April, he will remain with the Indians, trade for their furs, and pay for the same when the boat to be dispatched from the fort after the disruption of the ice arrives there.

Whilst I believe this to be the very best plan we can adopt at present, I confess there is some risk and danger attending it; but as I have great confidence in Mr. M———'s good sense and judgment, I think he will carry out his intentions in a satisfactory and successful manner, without coming into any unpleasant or awkward collision with his opponents. I have advised him to act toward them in a firm, liberal, and conciliatory spirit and to avoid all unnecessary discussion. I have also recommended him to try to come to some understanding with those in authority amongst them, which would be binding on both parties until our position there be properly defined by an arrangement to be hereafter entered into between the H. B. Co. and the United States Government.

It was obvious that the Company, labouring under the great disadvantage of being obliged to import supplies at very great trouble, delay, and expense across an entire continent, could not possibly be expected to compete successfully with an opposition which, with supplies comparatively close at hand, were able, by the aid of steam alone, to resort to the most eligible points for trade.

This being the case, it is as easy for us to make use of the same route and means, and I would therefore strongly urge that a district be formed on the west side of the mountains, which should be attached to the Western Department, the posts to consist of Fort Yukon (headquarters), Selkirk, the proposed new post at the Que-hee-le River, LaPierre's House and Peel's River.

For the outfitting of the new district [Peel's] a small

steamer I believe could annually make the voyage from Victoria to Yukon and back — she might even proceed as high as Selkirk to render the outfit and receive the returns of that post, while the supplies required for the trade of La Pierre's House and Peel's River might be conveyed by boat to the former place. The people of the latter post would only have their own outfits and returns to cross in the winter — not half the work they now have in performing the Yukon transport business.

Another enterprising trader reported: —

It would be extremely injudicious to excite the cupidity of the Yankees by making them thus cognizant of the valuable returns annually exported from the Mackenzie River District.

The Arctic Sea also abounds with whales, seals, and walruses. Is it not highly probable that the Americans will shortly attempt to turn these valuable resources to some account, and if one or more of the fur-trading companies succeed in establishing themselves to the eastward of Point Barrow, what is to prevent them from penetrating to Mackenzie River and even beyond?

It seemed as if the time had arrived for the Company to give up the old ways with their peculiar trouble and annoyances, and at once send a steamer to ascertain the practicability of the proposed new way by Behring Strait, and thereby not only anticipate the Americans, but also benefit the Company's trade in the entire country north of Portage La Loche. "I agree," wrote Commissioner Smith. "If this enterprise is entrusted to a man of

patience, courage, and energy, I have no doubt of its success."

Chief Factor W. L. Hardisty was informed that Fort Resolution was to be abandoned, and two posts, Hay River and Fond du Lac, established instead. All the Chipewyans living along the Slave River were thenceforward to trade at Salt River, which along with them was transferred to Athabasca. "The Buffalo Lake Indians, if they will trade at our tariff, can go to Hay River, or if not, they may go to Vermilion."

To Chief Factor W. L. Hardisty

Your plan of going on periodical trading expeditions to the distant Indians is evidently the one great thing now needed at the Yukon. It is certainly the only way by which the trade can be carried on to any extent or profit under present circumstances, with all the adverse influences that have been brought to bear against you. I would therefore advise you to profit by the chance while you have it entirely in your power, taking care always to reserve a sufficient supply of those descriptions of goods which are in greatest demand among the Indians whom you visit.

From Chief Factor Lawrence Clarke

York Factory, Hudson's Bay.

We have already caught about fifty foxes, of which five are silver, and seven cross, the balance red and white. I also caught a huge wolf and we caught and shot a dozen Arctic hares between us. We are living

rather poorly just now. Salt salmon for breakfast, and white partridge all the rest of the time. We hope to get some venison the end of next month, but I have as yet seen no signs of deer in this vicinity. We are not badly off, after all, I can assure you, for we import direct from England and get out quantities of preserved meats, vegetables, potatoes, and even milk as a standby.

From Factor Henry Hardisty

December 22d, 1873.

Our carts from the plains have just arrived, having had to go about three or four hundred miles for their meat. The difficulty of getting provisions here is getting greater year after year. The meat at present brought in will cost the company at least one shilling per pound, apart from the tear and wear of oxen and horses. The carts sent out this season of the year are also generally useless when returned.

By the hunters who arrived to-day I hear that the Crees have had a good whipping from the Blackfeet lately. It appears a large party of Crees went in search of the Blackfeet to steal horses, and seeing at a distance a few lodges, concluded to make a descent upon them, but on getting closer discovered that it was a very large camp of Blackfeet. The Blackfeet rushed out and chased the Crees into the south branch of the Saskatchewan along the banks of which they were camped, and killed fifty-two of them. There were supposed to have been between two and three hundred Crees at this engagement. I should think that between enemies and smallpox, the different tribes of Indians who infest the plains must be getting gradually less. There is one tribe of Indians on the other plains,

called the Circees (friendly with the Blackfeet), who are only left with one tent, the smallpox having made quite a hole in that tribe. The tribe was supposed to have numbered sixty lodges last spring.

Mr. Clarke has just started for Red River. He arrived here on the 19th instant from Edmonton, and is now on his way home. Captain Butler did not return with him, but is going to Helena, Montana, and from there will strike for the Pacific Railway.

From Robert Hamilton to R. MacFarlane

Norway House, 1873.

You will have heard with regret of the death of Mr. James Anderson (b), late Chief Factor in charge of the Southern Department, and lastly Mr. Alexander Christie. Is it not a sad roll of our old officers? James Anderson was one of the most intimate friends I had in the world, and his death was a great shock to me. You will have heard of the disaster to the *Walrus* on her homeward trip last fall. The Board say that all loss both to cargo and vessel will be fully covered by insurance.

The whole Province has lately been in a great state of excitement, as the local elections have just come off and in most of the parishes there was great competition. The Hudson's Bay Company took no part in the elections this time, and I think that in consequence of their not having thrown their influence in with either party, that they have made enemies on both sides. It is said that Mactavish gave his private support to the Davis-Schultz faction, and, of course, all suppose he was representing the Hudson's Bay Company, for Mr. Graham is utterly unknown in the Province and has

no weight whatever in Manitoba. I am pleased to tell you that Schultz has at length got himself into a tight place, having been committed by the judge to stand his trial at the next assizes for perjury. Some say that he cannot possibly get out of the scrape, and that there is a strong probability of his being down in the penitentiary here, with a ball to his leg!

From Factor Alex Matheson

Rapid River, 4th March, 1873.

The Indians are getting awkward and unmanageable, sometimes going in to Red River with their furs and bringing free-traders back with them. In the North you cannot realize what real opposition is. There is none here, and when I am home I hardly know what to do with myself for want of occupation; but at the Pas and other places I have been at, the pains of purgatory are nothing to the constant worry one is everlastingly in, when these interlopers abound.

From Chief Factor D. MacArthur

These rascally Yankees have been giving us a great deal of trouble, but I think they will get tired of it by and by. I don't believe they have the endurance and perseverance requisite for being successful in the fur-trade, indeed, I doubt very much if any nationality is fully adapted to prosecute the fur-trade successfully except the Scotch. I have been slowly coming round to this conclusion for some years past.

From Factor W. McMurray

Isle à la Crosse, 2d December, 1874.

You will be glad to learn that Mr. Clarke, before he left for Canada, managed to secure a good quantity of seasoned provisions at Carlton. This will enable us here to carry on the transport of pieces with greater facility. Another welcome piece of news to you will be that the *Northcote*, the new Saskatchewan steamer, made the trial trip to Carlton in safety.

Mr. MacFarlane has his own troubles in Athabasca from the presence of free-traders in the Upper Peace River, but we have our petty annoyances also. Apart from Paul Lalonde, who, as mentioned elsewhere, has established himself at Green Lake, there are others between that place and Carlton.

I have not heard from W. J. Christie of late. But I learnt from Clarke that he (Christie) had accompanied the Government officials to Qu'Appelle, where, it was rumoured, a treaty was to have been made with some of the plains tribes. Of Major Butler[1] I have not heard anything since July.

From Chief Commissioner D. A. Smith

3d April, 1873.

The circumstance of our trade and occupation of the country, no less than our own individual interests, render it necessary that we should crush out opposition — I might say lawless opposition, for it is governed by none of the laws and rules which have always regulated our own conduct — by every legitimate means.

[1] Later Lieutenant-General Sir William F. Butler.

These free-traders of whom you complain are actuated only by a desire to make an immediate profit, at whatever cost to the Indians or the morals of the community or to the future of the fur-bearing animals; and then depart to leave us to bear the consequences of their cupidity and ruthlessness.

From Chief Factor Roderick MacFarlane

PORTAGE LA LOCHEM, 15th July, 1873.

I have in previous communications pointed out to you that boat work was played out, and I again beg to reiterate the statement, with further request that no time be lost in putting steam on the Athabasca and Mackenzie Rivers. A relative subject of grave importance is that of servants. Although I have this season secured nearly all those serving this district, for periods varying from one to two years, without making any material increase in their wages, I must not conceal from you that, bad as the present lot are in some respects, we cannot well, even by offering increased pay, have them replaced by better or as good hands from Red River, and that it will therefore be advisable to grant good terms to those we now have in Athabasca, and also introduce steam as quickly as possible, and thus enable us to dispense with a number of servants at present absolutely required for our district transportation business.

Before concluding I must be permitted to point out my high sense of the importance of the services rendered by the officers attached to this district, and from their merit and long service I would particularly beg to recommend for speedy promotion Messrs. MacAulay, McKenzie, and Moberly. Apart from the

justice of the thing, I believe that such a course would have a most beneficial effect on the future of Athabasca.

In 1874 a steamer built on the Saskatchewan proceeded up the river some six hundred miles to Carlton, and from that point to Rocky Mountain House. The draft of this steamer was only two and a half or three feet. It was about one hundred and fifty feet in length and thirty feet of beam, and capable of carrying a very considerable cargo. Mr. Smith found that the navigation might safely be begun in June and continued until some time in September. He himself descended the river some five hundred miles in July and August, and found then plenty of water for a boat drawing four or five feet.

Though he said afterwards that he had great respect for scientific men, he was bound to say that if the Hudson's Bay Company had been guided by the reports of engineers, they never would have dared to launch a steamer on the Saskatchewan. Others reported that the river was navigable, and he took the responsibility of building a steamer at a cost of fifty or sixty thousand dollars. It is true one steamer was wrecked, but it was not directly owing to the difficulties of navigation. The vessel, "through some misunderstanding between the captain and the officer, fell on the rocks in the rapids, and the wood being soft and the cargo heavy, was lost. Undeterred by this, another vessel was built." [1]

[1] *Parliamentary Debates*, 1876.

His Impending Resignation

This year Fort Smith was established by Chief Factor MacFarlane and it, as well as Smith Landing, the southern end of the intervening wagon-road, was named in honour of the then Chief Commissioner.

Chief Factor Hamilton to Chief Factor MacFarlane

MONTREAL, 2d January, 1874.

I wrote you last from the Saskatchewan, giving you an account of the miserable disaster that occurred there last August, — I mean the wreck of our new steamer. After getting all the cargo dried, as much as we could, I made my way back to Fort Garry, where I met our Chief Commissioner and in company with him started for Carlton on the 23d of September. From Carlton, Mr. Smith turned back to Fort Garry, making the distance in five days, while I was ordered to proceed on to the upper posts of the Saskatchewan on a little pleasure trip. I would have enjoyed the trip very much, indeed, had the season not been so far advanced, but as it was I had some cold drives before I got back to Fort Garry, on the 27th of November.

You will hear from Mr. Smith by this opportunity regarding his intention of meeting his officers next spring in Council at Carlton. I have strongly urged upon him the advisability, I may say the necessity, of his doing so, and I am glad to say he has consented to summon all you gentlemen who are within hail. I have suggested that yourself, McMurray, Rich, Hardisty, McKay, and Clarke could meet him at Carlton, and I feel assured that in course of a day or so more business can be got through than could be affected by a

six months' correspondence. I trust you all think so too. There is a rumour that Mr. Smith is going to resign a certain portion of his duties, so that it is barely possible you may have a stranger with you. If so, I trust he will prove a man with whom we will all be able to pull amicably.

Mr. Smith may have his little faults, but all who know him feel that he is the true, upright gentleman, whose integrity is beyond all question. For my own part, I shall regret exceedingly when Mr. Smith severs his connection with the fur-trade, for so long as he remained at our head, I knew we had a man who would see that we had justice done us, at least as far as lay in his power. There has been a cry that Mr. Smith has been superseded, but this is false. Mr. Smith has not been superseded, but has asked to be relieved of a portion of his duties, which are more than any one man is able to attend to. I do not myself know exactly what portion of his present duties he will resign, but rather think it will be his immediate connection with the fur-trade. However, I am not by any means assured that it will be so, and I presume it will be some little time before it is made public.

An answer to all the fears and carping criticism to which he had been subjected, even by his oldest friends, was at length forthcoming: —

From Chief Commissioner Smith

MONTREAL, 2d January, 1874.

For your own information and that of other commissioned officers within your district, I beg to enclose herewith statement of the result of trade in the

Northern, Southern, Western, and Montreal Departments for Outfit 1872. Showing in the first an apparent gain of forty-eight thousand, five hundred and forty-four pounds, two shillings and eight pence (£48,544. 2. 8) against thirteen thousand, nine hundred and forty pounds, fourteen shillings and four pence (£13,940. 14. 4) in 1871. In the second, sixteen thousand and fifty-five pounds, five pence (£16,055. 0. 5) against twelve thousand six hundred and eighty-one pounds, five shillings and nine pence (£12,681. 5. 9) in 1871. In the third, sixty-six thousand two hundred and eighty-four dollars and eighty cents ($66,284.80) and in the last an apparent loss of eight thousand and ninety dollars and twenty-two cents ($8,090.22), as against an apparent gain of thirteen thousand and sixty-one dollars and six cents ($13,061.06) in 1871.

While the three former as thus exhibited show very handsome profits, it is to be regretted the Montreal Department is so much less favourable than it was last year, but as the bulk of the returns consists of furs, many of them worth considerably more than the prices at which they are placed on the statement, it is believed that the actual result of the business of this department instead of a loss will be a profit to some extent. The detention of the *Lady Head* in the country with the returns of the Southern Department, will to some extent detract from the gains of Outfit 1872 as a whole, but notwithstanding this, it may be expected that the dividends for that outfit will be more than an average, and such as will give satisfaction to those interested in it.

It is with much pleasure I have also to inform you that the reports of the trade from the district in the several departments are, so far as have yet been heard

from, favourable, giving promise of a good result for the business of the current outfit.

P.S. The accounts of the Athabasca and English River District not having reached York Factory last year in sufficient time to admit of the balances of these districts being made up and included in the statement of the Department for Outfit 1871, these two were carried to Suspense Account, and consequently are not embraced in the statement of Result of Trade for that outfit, and have not yet been received here from England. For the information of the commissioned officers it may, however, be mentioned that the returns of English River for Outfit 1871 amounted to £4,648. 6. 0; those of Outfit 1872 are only valued at £3,576. 4. 3, while there would be a balance as the Result of Trade in favour of Athabasca District for Outfit 1871 of upwards of £10,000, or about equal to that of the same district for Outfit 1872.

Those Factors and Traders who had doubted the Chief Commissioner's ability to make the fur-trade pay now hastened to congratulate him and themselves.

"After receiving such large dividends you will not consider yourselves serfs in future," wrote Chief Factor Roderick McKenzie, who had retired in disgust in 1871. "I am afraid you have already in a measure immortalized him! He is worthy of credit for his great penetration and I now reproach myself for discrediting his statements and throwing away my heritage against the wish of my friends."

At the same time Mr. Smith had realized the

hopelessness of the situation. "No matter what efforts I should put forth, I should still fail to make large, continuous, and immediate profits for the commissioned officers, out of the fur-trade alone. When the country is peopled, we could do it by shop-keeping, on a large scale; but many intervening lean years would cause a revolt."

Thus, though reluctantly, he gave up the struggle to make profit for the Company through fur alone and accepted the office of Land Commissioner. Chief Factor James A. Grahame was appointed his successor.

From Chief Commissioner Donald A. Smith

HUDSON'S BAY HOUSE,
5 ST. PETER ST., MONTREAL,
30th May, 1874.

It becomes my duty to inform you that with the close of the current outfit, 1873, my connection with the Hudson's Bay Company, in the capacity of Superintendent of the Fur-Trade and commercial business, ceases.

In thus closing my official connection with the officers of the Company with whom it has been my privilege to have been associated for six and thirty years, I beg to thank you for the cordial and undeviating support and assistance I have received at your hands while superintending the trade, and to assure you that I shall retain a lively sense of the same and always feel pleasure in the success of yourself and every other officer connected with the service.

While taking leave of you in the capacity in which we have heretofore stood toward each other officially,

I may mention that, at the request of the Governor and Committee, I shall continue to represent the Company in respect of their important landed interests, and such other matters as do not immediately pertain to the trade and commercial business.

It may not be out of place for me here to add that I shall as formerly give my attention to the personal interests of my friends, connected with the service, who have investments with private cash in my hands, this latter, as you are aware, having throughout been entirely independent of my relation to the Company as their Commissioner.

DON. A. SMITH.

END OF VOLUME I

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